

Art Review:

'Artists are just niche-ing their thing and then putting up their big billboards saying "Look at me"' Laurie Anderson

April 2011

Christian Viveros-Fauné:
John Maynard Keynes's lessons on art

J.J. Charlesworth:
Unpacking the government's latest gift to the arts

Brian Dillon:
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Sam Jacob:
On why we need to reassess our attitudes to fakes

LAURIE ANDERSON

How the medium really became the message

EDGAR ARCENEUX

Can you create art and be socially useful?

DANIEL RICHTER

On confronting tradition

JEAN-MICHEL OTHONIEL

Whisper it softly – beauty's back

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A visual conversation



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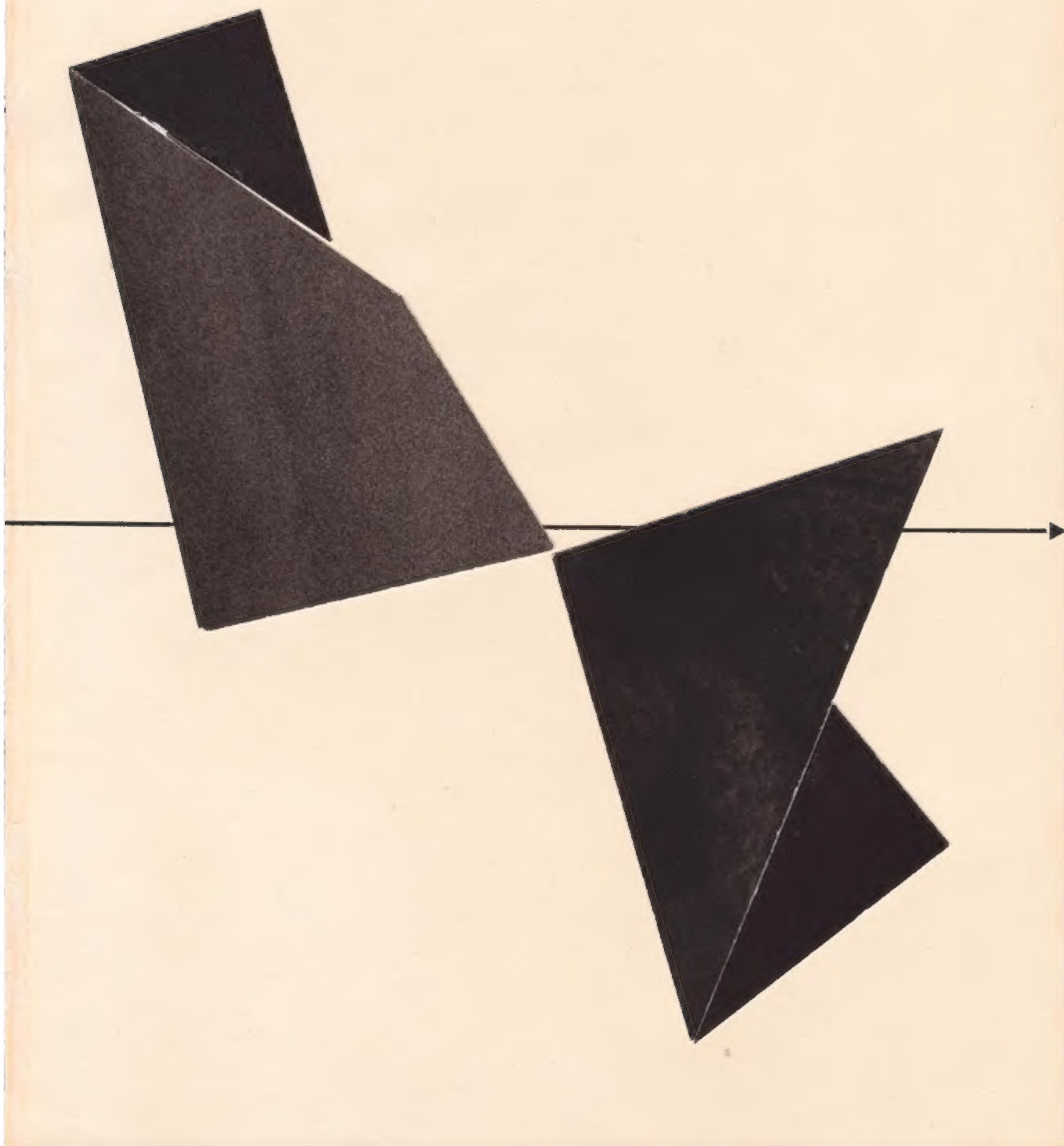
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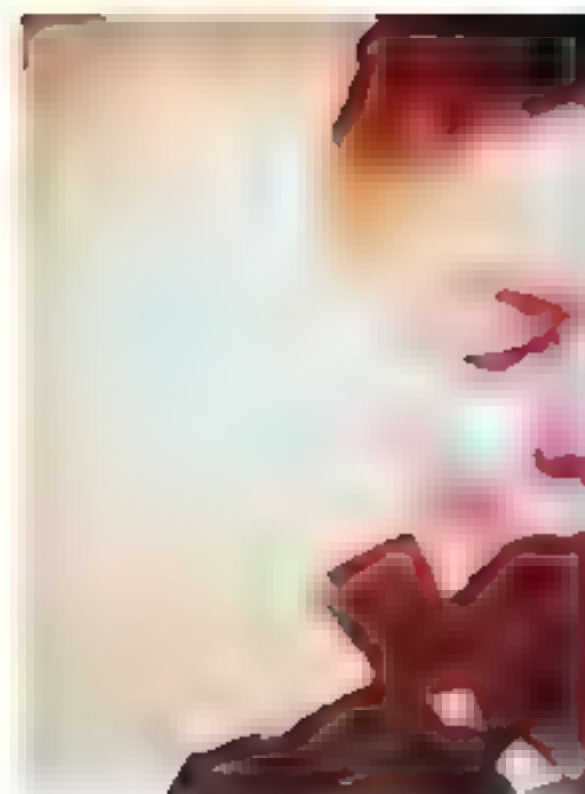
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John Bock, *Palms*, 2007. Digital color video with sound (59 min., 14 sec.) on 14 sec. Photo: Scott Groller, courtesy Kleutzel, Berlin, and Anton Keri Gallery, New York.

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photographed by NICK HAYMES

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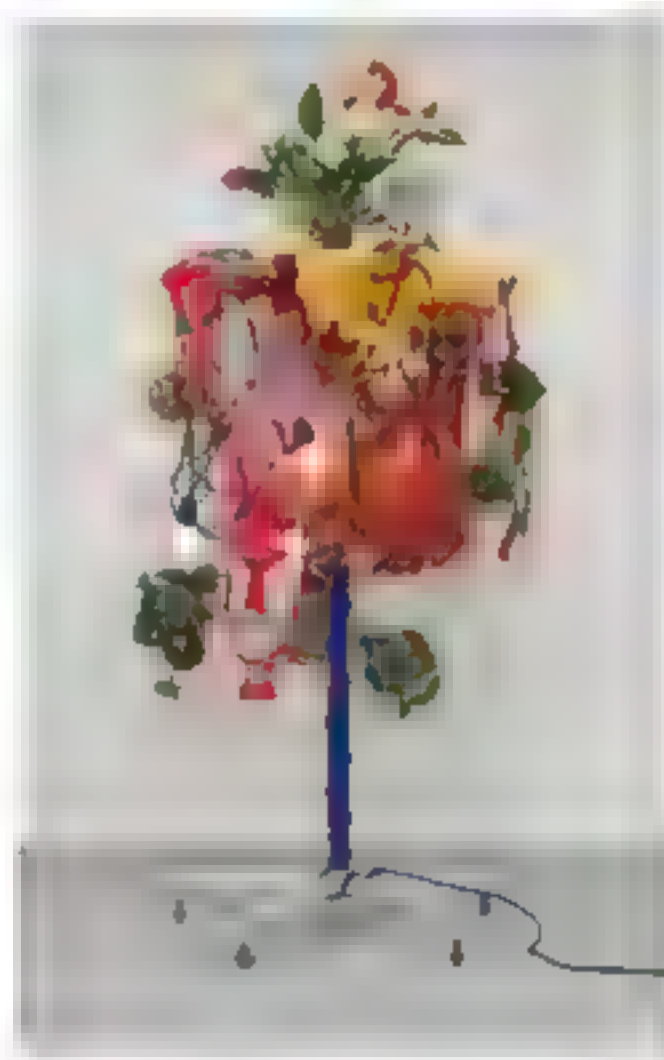
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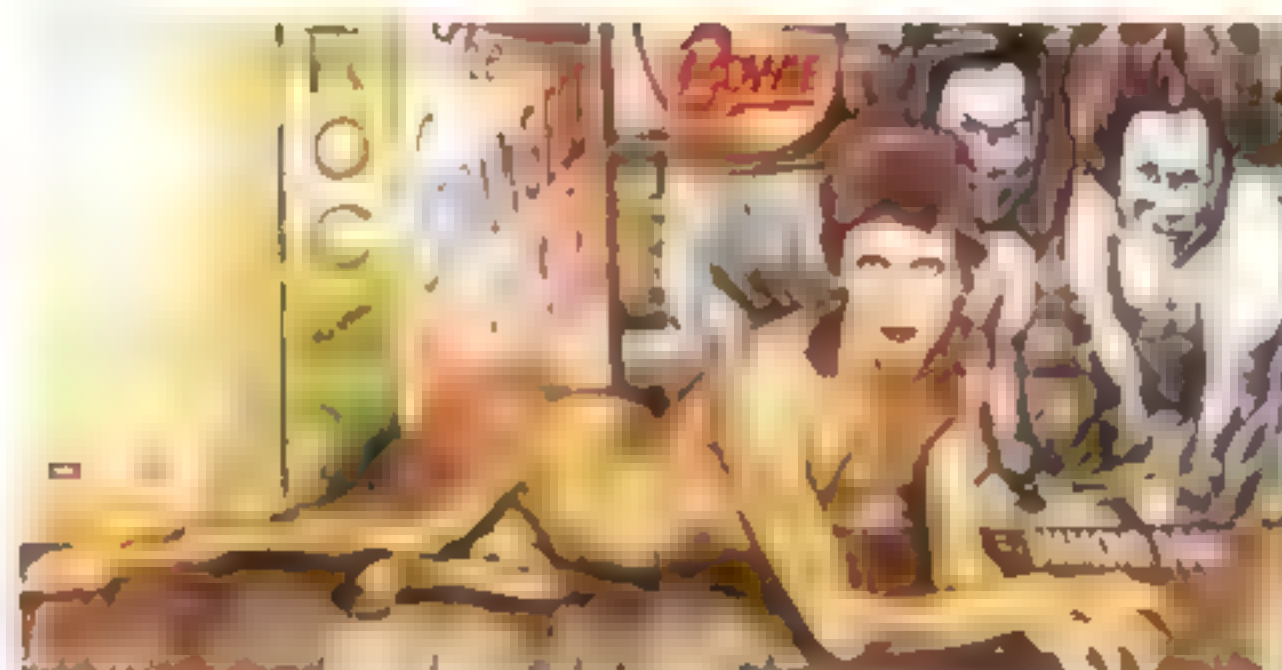
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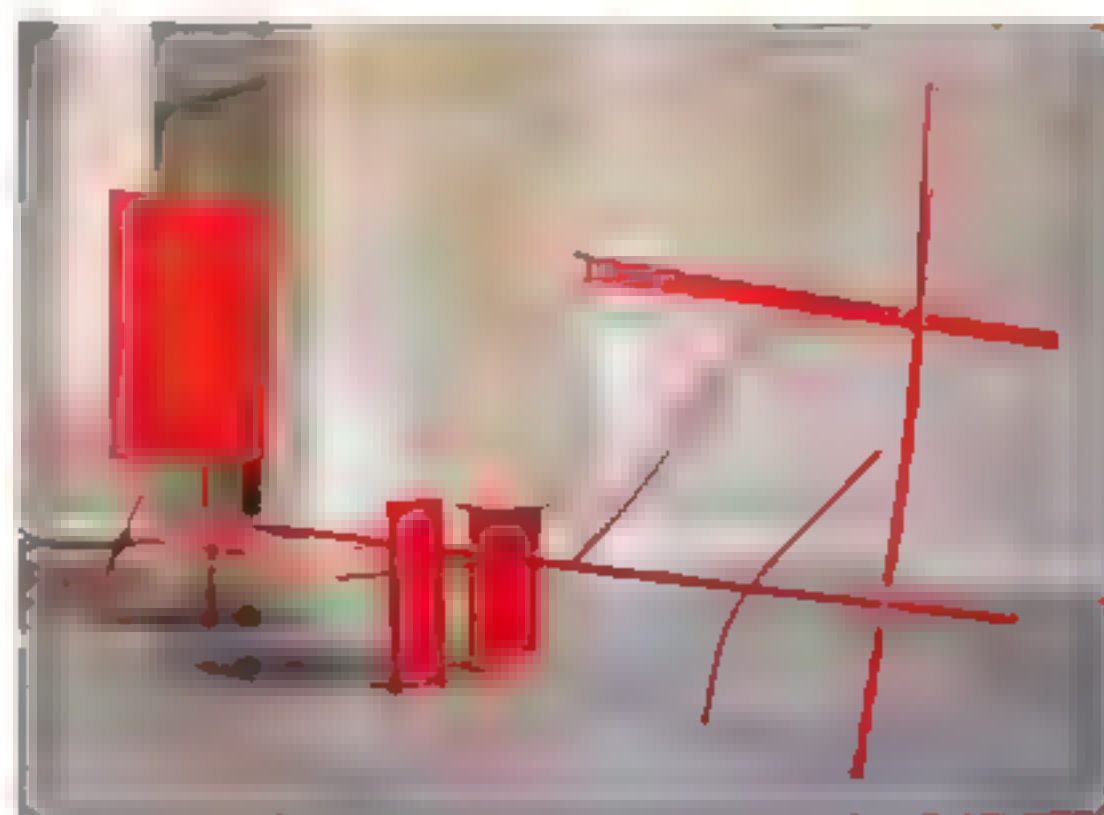
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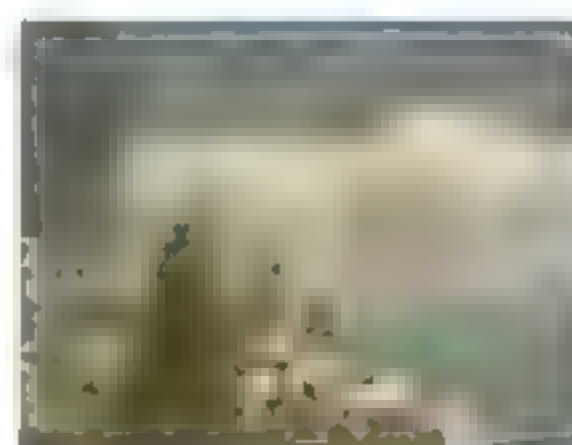
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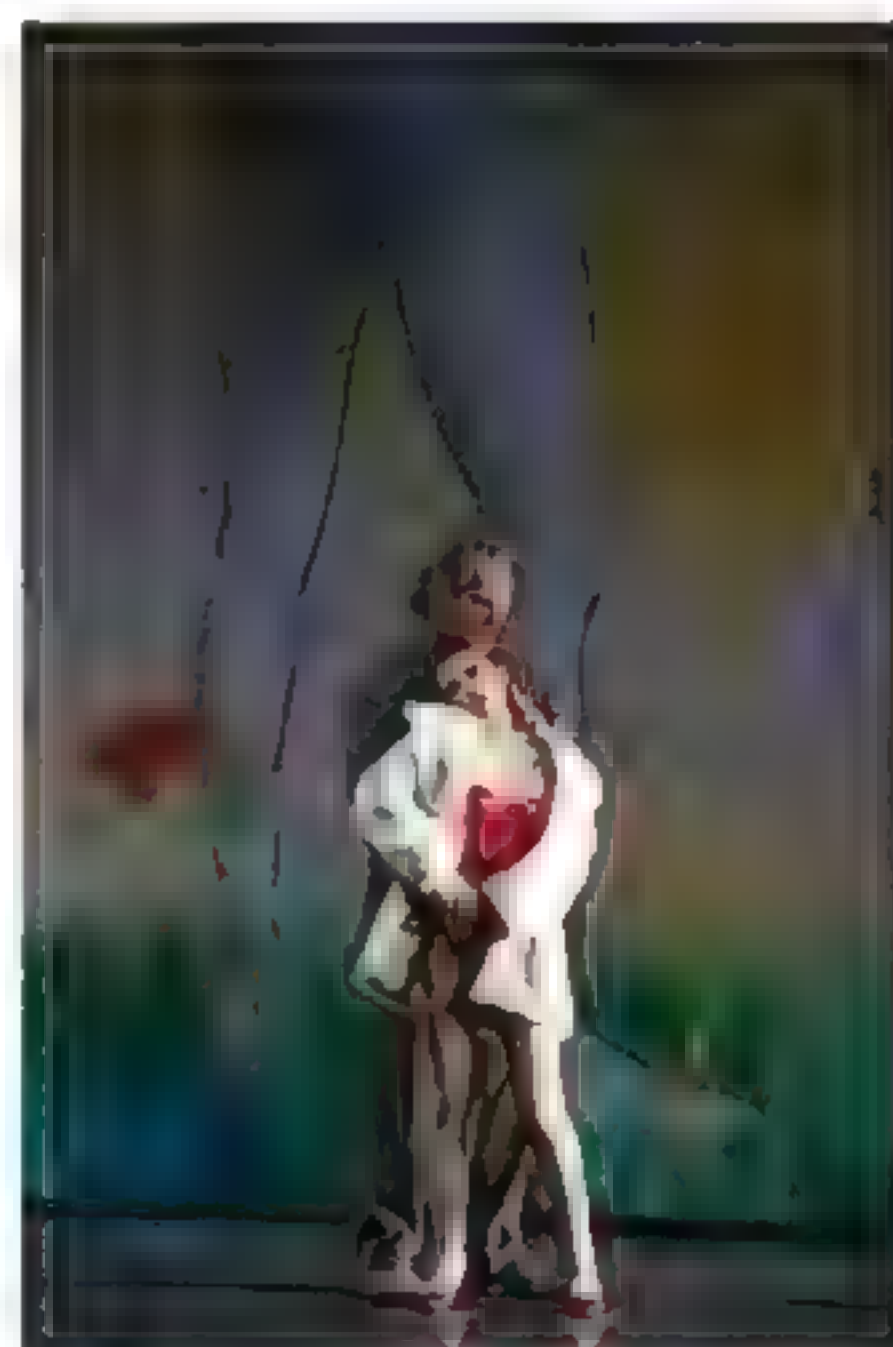
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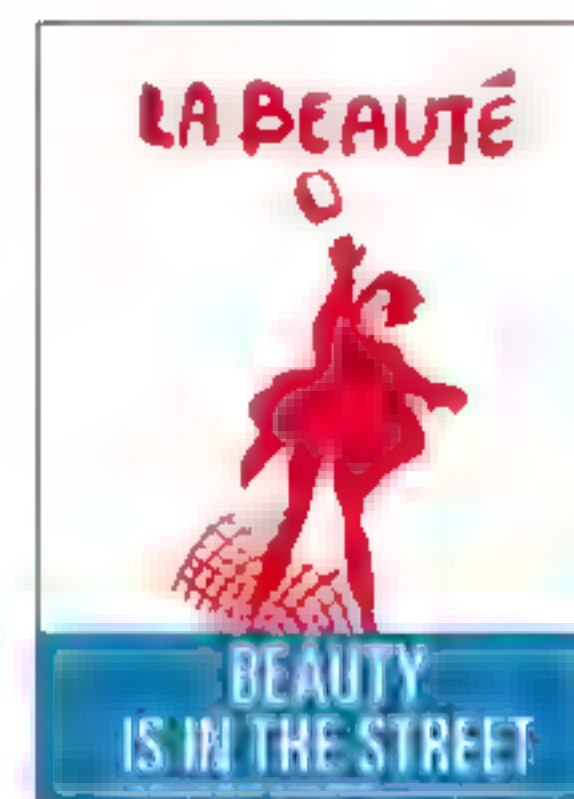
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Trevor Paglen, Untitled (Reaper Drone), 2010, c-print, 122x152 cm. Courtesy the artist.

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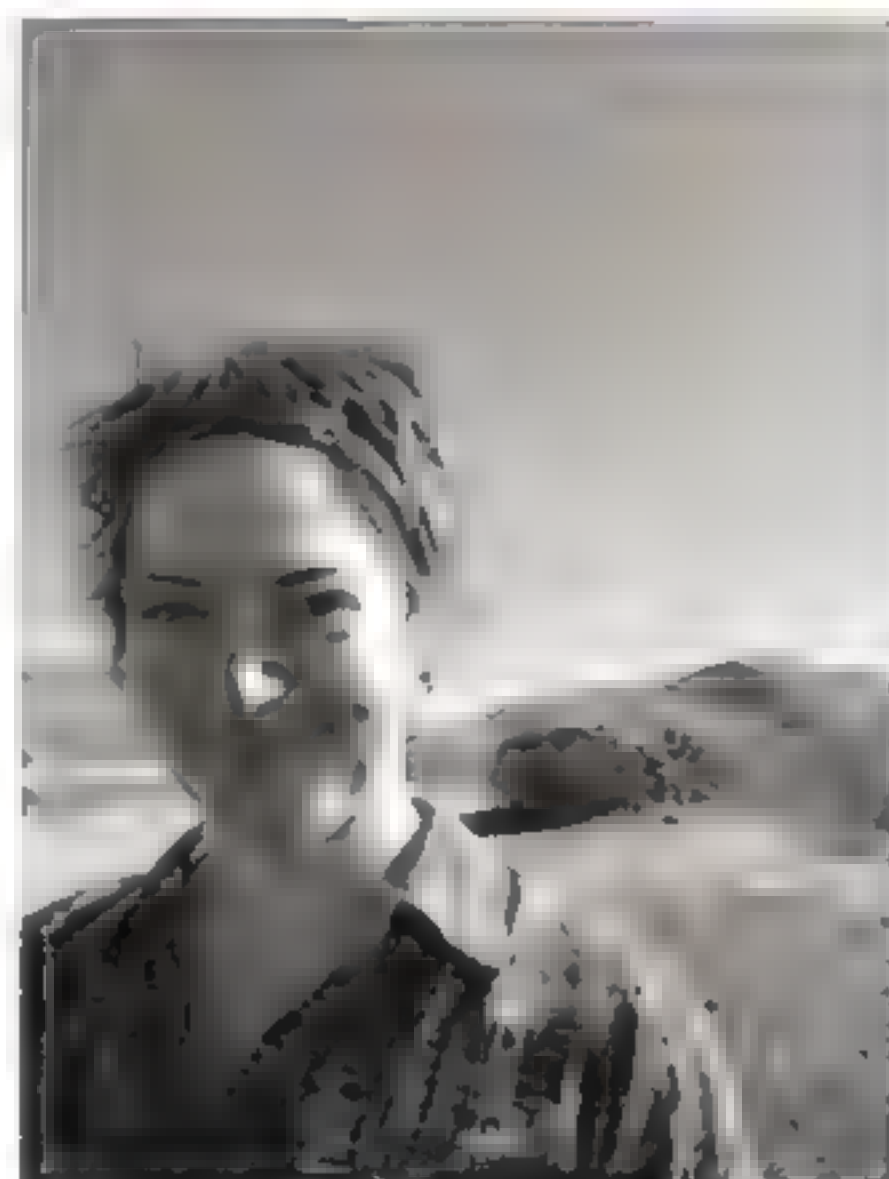
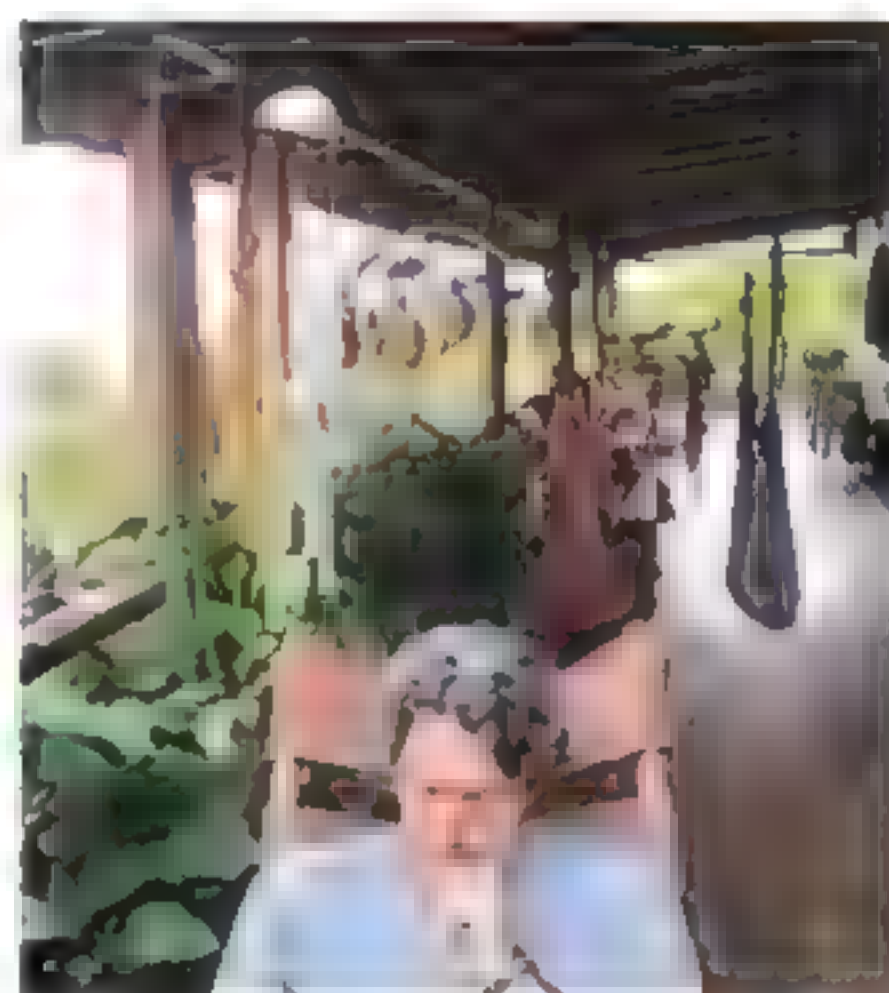
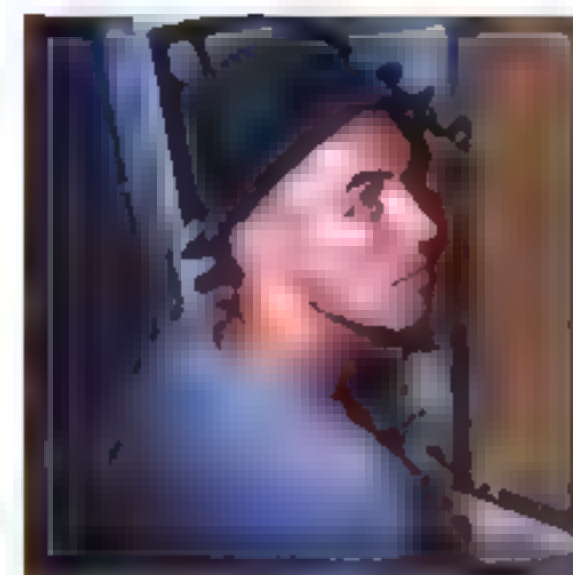
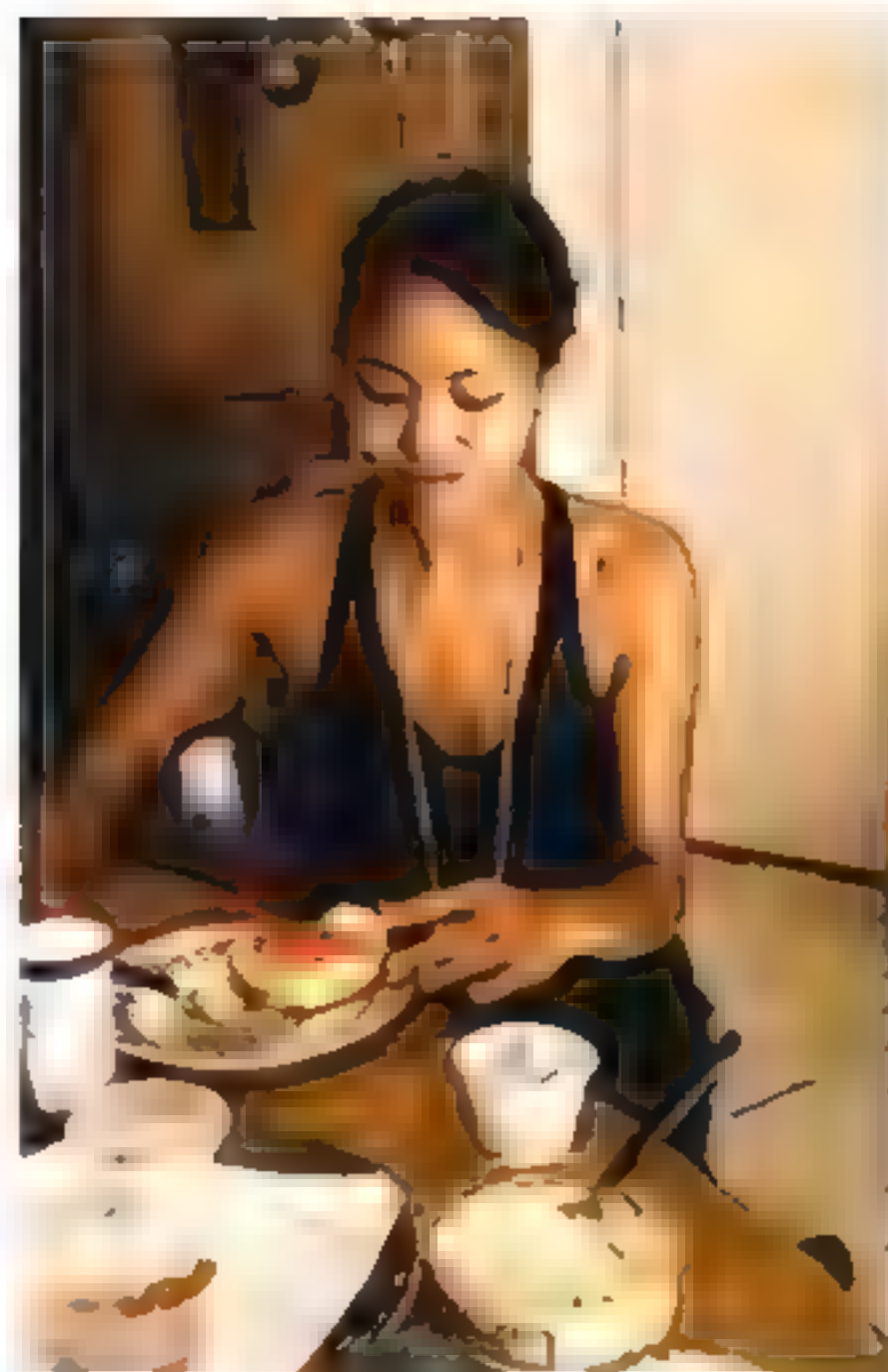
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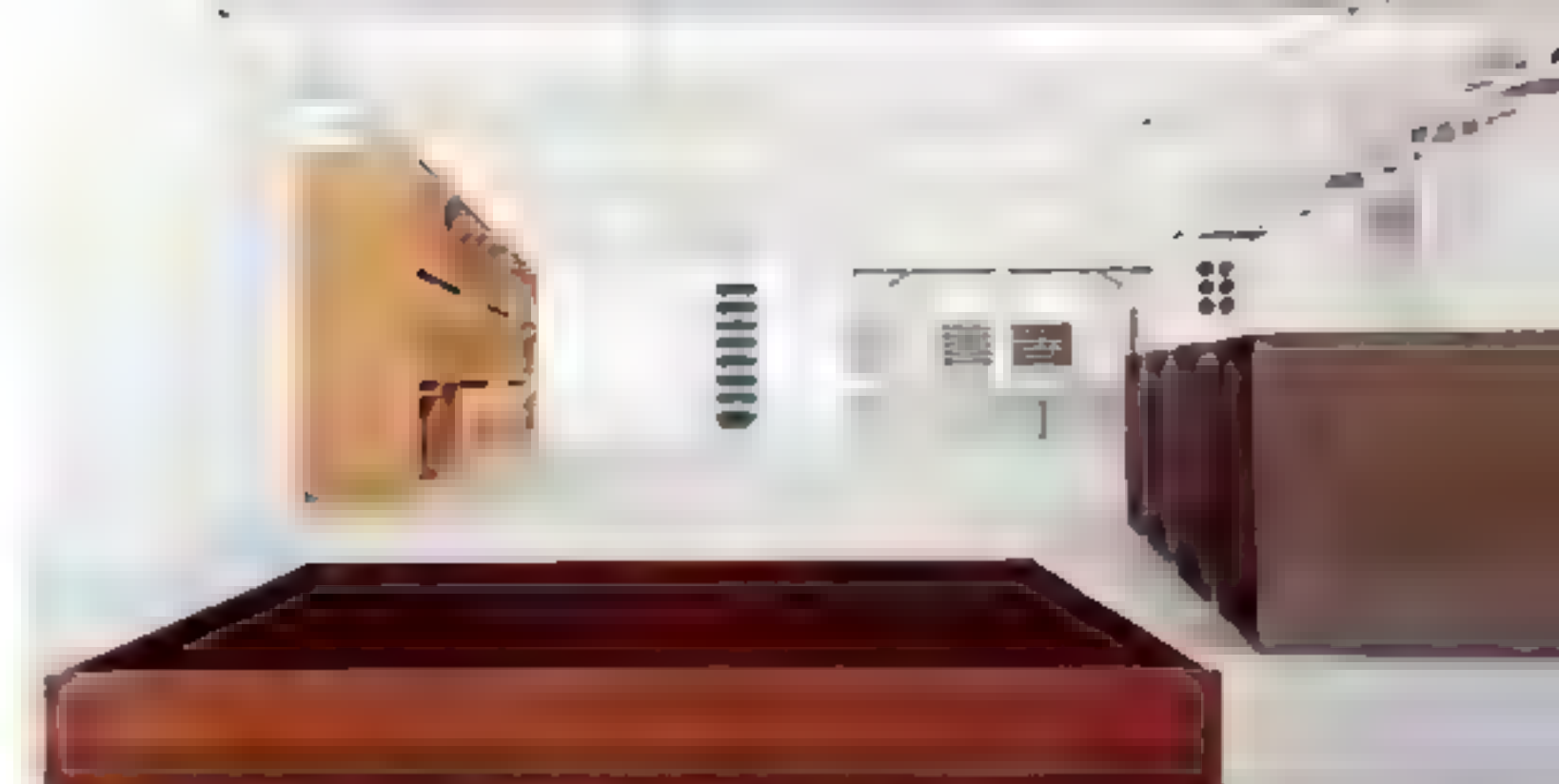
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1999 - 2000	Sensation: Young British Artists From The Saatchi Gallery The Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York
2006	The Triumph Of Painting Leeds City Art Gallery
2006	USA Today. New American Art From The Saatchi Gallery Royal Academy of Arts, London
2008	USA Today. New American Art From The Saatchi Gallery The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia
2009	Newspeak: British Art Now The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia
2010	La Route De La Soie / The Silk Road, Tri Postal, Lille, France Saatchi Gallery Exhibition at Ipswich Art School Gallery

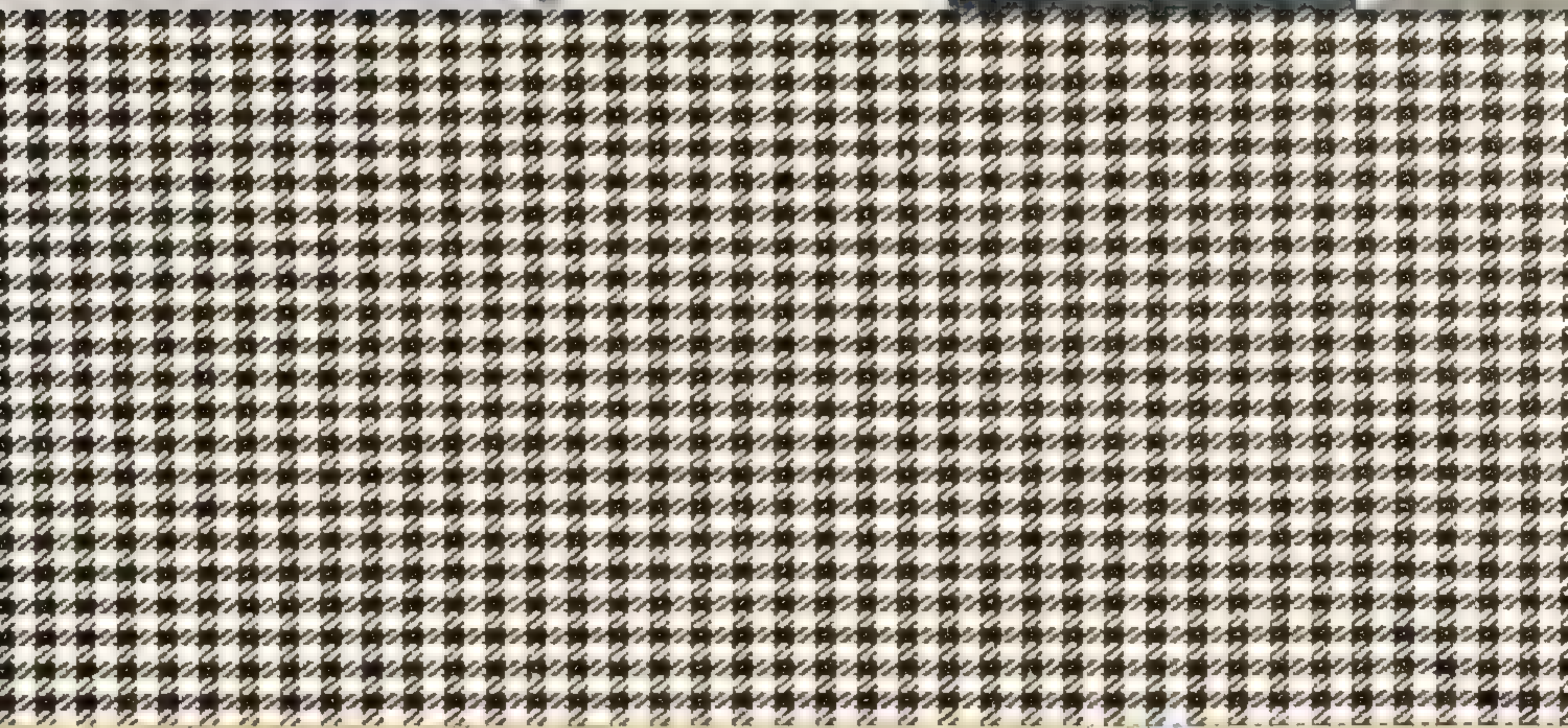


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snapshot **SAM FALLS**

'Reciprocating portraits on a couple's vacation is always fun/ny. Here's Isabel resting at Big Bend National Park on our road trip this winter to Marfa, TX.'

NOW SEE THIS

words **MARTIN HERBERT**

Most major art institutions settle in cities, where the money and most of the people are. But one sector of artistic production resists your average space-hungry metropolis: large-scale and/or outdoor sculpture. You need rolling acres for that. Think of Storm King Art Center in upstate New York, Inhotim in Brazil and, in England, Yorkshire Sculpture Park. The latter - soon to be joined by the David Chipperfield-designed Hepworth in making Wakefield a mini-Mecca for sculpture - this month gives

Jaume Plensa (*Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, 9 April – 4 September,*

www.ysp.co.uk) the luxuriant elbowroom he'd likely be denied in, say, London. The Catalan artist, whose objects interpenetrate the internal



and external, here punctuates green fields and galleries with oversize keening bodies - translucent ciphers lit from within, ambivalently pensive; figures composed of illegible chains of cutout metal letters, brimming with language yet incommunicative.

Indeed, it's really not London's month. Cue fanfare, wave your beach towels in the air:

Revealed: Turner Contemporary
Opens (*Turner Contemporary,*
Margate, 16 April – 4 September, [www.](http://www.turnercontemporary.org)
[turnercontemporary.org](http://www.turnercontemporary.org)) sees the long-

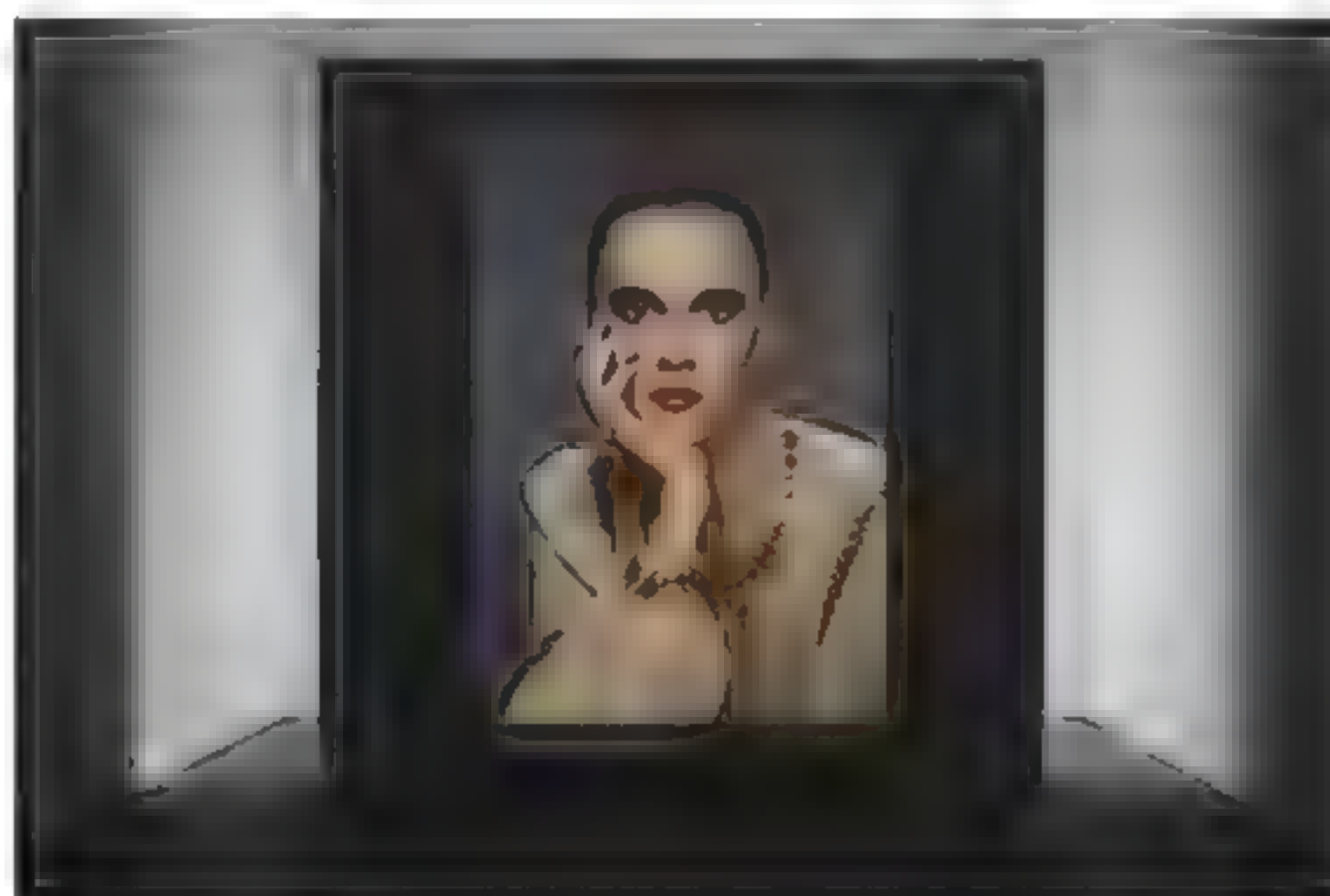
gestating institution in Tracey Emin's salty seaside hometown finally unseal its (also Chipperfield-designed) headquarters. Naturally they're starting with JMW Turner, who was schooled in Margate and visited, palette in hand, for years after. His little known, lengthily titled 1815 painting of an erupting volcano opens a show about wonder and creativity, bedecked with commissions by Daniel Buren, Russell Crotty, Ellen Harvey and Conrad



Shawcross, and new work by Teresita Fernández and Douglas Gordon. The amalgam of localism and internationalism augurs well.

A regional English show held 54 years ago - the Richard Hamilton-curated *an Exhibit* at Newcastle's Hatton Gallery - is still causing ripples, to judge from unExhibit (Generali Foundation, Vienna, to 17 July, www.foundation).

generali.at). The original project was an audacious refusal: some coloured panels in place of anything then resembling art. Here, curators Sabine Folie and Ilse Lafer encourage Hamilton and seven other artists to go further: 'exhibiting... the act of not exhibiting'. Heimo Zobernig reconstructs one of the gallery walls; Willem Oorebeek pastes up affectless, Benday-dotted wallpaper. It's for metaphysicians to ponder whether this constitutes exhibiting or not, but Turner Contemporary clearly missed a trick in not designating their protracted nonopening as an art project.



From left: Jaume Plensa, *Dialogue*, 2009, polycarbonate resin, stainless steel, light, marble pebbles, dimensions variable, collection Copperhill Mountain Lodge, Arc, photo: Jonas Kullman, courtesy Galerie Leong, New York; Conrad Shawross, *Chord*, 2009 (installation view, Kingsway Itam Suiway, London), aluminium, steel, mechanical and cord, dimensions variable, © the artist, courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery, London; Katarina Pandan and Katarina Folegna, *141*, 2010 (installation view, Galerie Meyer Karner, Vienna, 2010), courtesy Galerie Meyer Karner, Vienna.

Javier Mariscal

From devising Cobi, the mascot dog of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, to conceiving the 2005 sculpture *Crash!*, an oversize reproduction of a seemingly exploding 1959 Chevrolet Impala, Javier Mariscal is a multifaceted, uninhibited force of natural creativity. This Spanish phenomenon is somehow able to dance in the high-pressure orbits of graphics, architecture, design, furniture, movies and art without ever losing his playful exuberance. He's not so much in his second childhood as still enjoying his first.

One of 11 brothers and sisters, Mariscal, born in Valencia, grew up with the sun, the Mediterranean and vivid street festivals. Each year, for the San José festival, he would construct his own miniature *fallas* based on the colourful cardboard sculptures – some realistic, others crazily exaggerated – that Valencians traditionally set on fire during the celebrations. He quit art college in Barcelona after two years, and when he was twenty-three he produced his earliest hippy comics, which were suppressed by General Franco's censors. After the dictator's death, in 1975, comics and other artforms flourished in Spain, and word of Mariscal's versatility started spreading abroad.

His next film project and exhibition, following last year's acclaimed animated movie *Chico & Rita* (now adapted into a graphic novel published by SelfMadeHero), reunite him with his talismanic cartoon critters *los Garriris*: hybrids of Mickey and Miró (or Goofy and Dufy). "This gang of characters was born suddenly, without realising", says Mariscal. "They were uncontrollable. When I draw *los Garriris*, I always feel they are the ones who make the decisions. Out of all of them, the tall one, Fermín, and the short one, Piker, decided that they were enough." The pair like nothing better than to ride their Vespas, hang out with girls and go to the beach with their fishing dog, Julian. "Julian is the most intelligent. He never speaks but he controls the situation. He has his head on his shoulders."

Mariscal likes surprising himself, so he never makes preparatory scripts or sketches for his comics. "There is no pencil in *los Garriris*. There is ink, the pen scratching the paper straight to the open grave, but there's no eraser – you can't 'undo', so any mistake you have to turn into something good." After his intoxicating retrospective at London's Design Museum in 2009, he currently has his first solo show in Brussels, where the two new *Garriris* strips in this issue are showing. "I love *los Garriris* very much", he says. "They are my family, my paper family."

Garriris is at Galerie Champaka, Brussels, 18 March to 23 April

words **PAUL GRAVETT**



Rob Pruitt (*Air de Paris, Paris, 6 April – 7 May, www.airdeparis.com*)

knows something about stretching the definition of art – into an extended insult to the artworld. The Washington, DC-born gadfly's creative career has encompassed controversialist antics, as part of Pruitt/Early, concerning the commodification of black culture; a 490cm line of coke on a winding, shaped mirror (*Cocaine Buffet*, 1998); exhibitions of iPhone photos; the hackles-raising annual Art Awards; and lately, paintings based on Amish quilts suggesting a knowingly puritanical detox from bad-boy behaviour. Can Pruitt reclaim the moral high ground? Did he ever stand upon it? Paris – which has long breathed naughtiness like air – may be the perfect place for him.

Zip through France to a cubist villa on its southeast tip, and you'll reach the 26th edition of the **Hyères International Festival of Fashion and Photography** (*Hyères, 29 April – 2 May, www.villanoailles-hyeres.com*), a maven-thronged barometer of sartorial and aesthetic trends that showcases ten jury-selected fashion designers (the event put



Paris

Hervé Guibert was a writer and photographer. He was also dramatically handsome. To the question in Proust's questionnaire 'Who would you have liked to be?' he answered: 'A dream creature, but I've already been one'. His favourite occupation? 'Blow jobs and writing'. Guibert caused a scandal in France with his book *To the Friend Who Did Not Save My Life* (1990), when he revealed that his friend Michel Foucault had died of AIDS.

Twenty years after Guibert's own death, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, in Paris, is showing his first important exhibition. A hundred or so prints, all in black and white – lots of white: sheets, veils, sunlit walls, pages of manuscripts, letters, candles, faces, windows. Desks of a writer in the 1980s: typewriter, inkwell, Tipp-Ex and tape recorder... And self-portraits. In one of Guibert's very first books, *The Phantom Image* (1981), he tells about how he sorted through his photos and destroyed the negatives of his youth, 'looking closely at the transformations of my face like the transformations of a character in a novel slowly moving towards death'. His 1981 self-portrait in New York, with hallucinated eyes and hair standing on end, makes you think of *Eraserhead* (1976). Other self-portraits as lifeless statues or with closed eyes, as if Guibert were embalmed, bring us to realise that this 'autofictional' writer was relating his death well before he knew he was ill. From a 'premonition in conspiracy' that was already apparent in his first novel, *Propaganda Death* (1977), he imagined himself in postures such as 'H.G., found lying in a pool of his own blood'.

Guibert was the first French writer to fictionalise his relationship with AIDS, to make it his own thing, monstrous, hybrid and recreated. 'I had AIDS for three months', he wrote, provocatively, in the preface of *To the Friend... In My Valet and Me* (1991) he saw himself as an old man with a sadistic manservant. In *Paradise* (1992), his last novel, he went so far as to imagine himself as heterosexual, the sick widower of a disembowelled swimmer. 'I'll never have read Proust or slept with a woman: so what?', he wrote in his last diary, *The Lovers' Mausoleum* (published in 2001). Quoting Austrian novelist Peter Handke's phrase 'Agony is the only possible epic tale', he filmed his last year on videotape in *Decency and Indecency* (1991).

This man who died at thirty-six left a complete body of work behind him. 'A barbarian, delicate body of work', as he put it himself at the end of his diary. His photos, accompanying the written work year after year, are portraits of the artist as an eternally young man. I never knew him, although I've read him extensively. In 1989 I was twenty, and I wrote a precocious thesis on him. I realise now that he will always be younger than me.

words **MARIE DARRIEUSSECQ**
translated from the French by EMMELENE LONDON

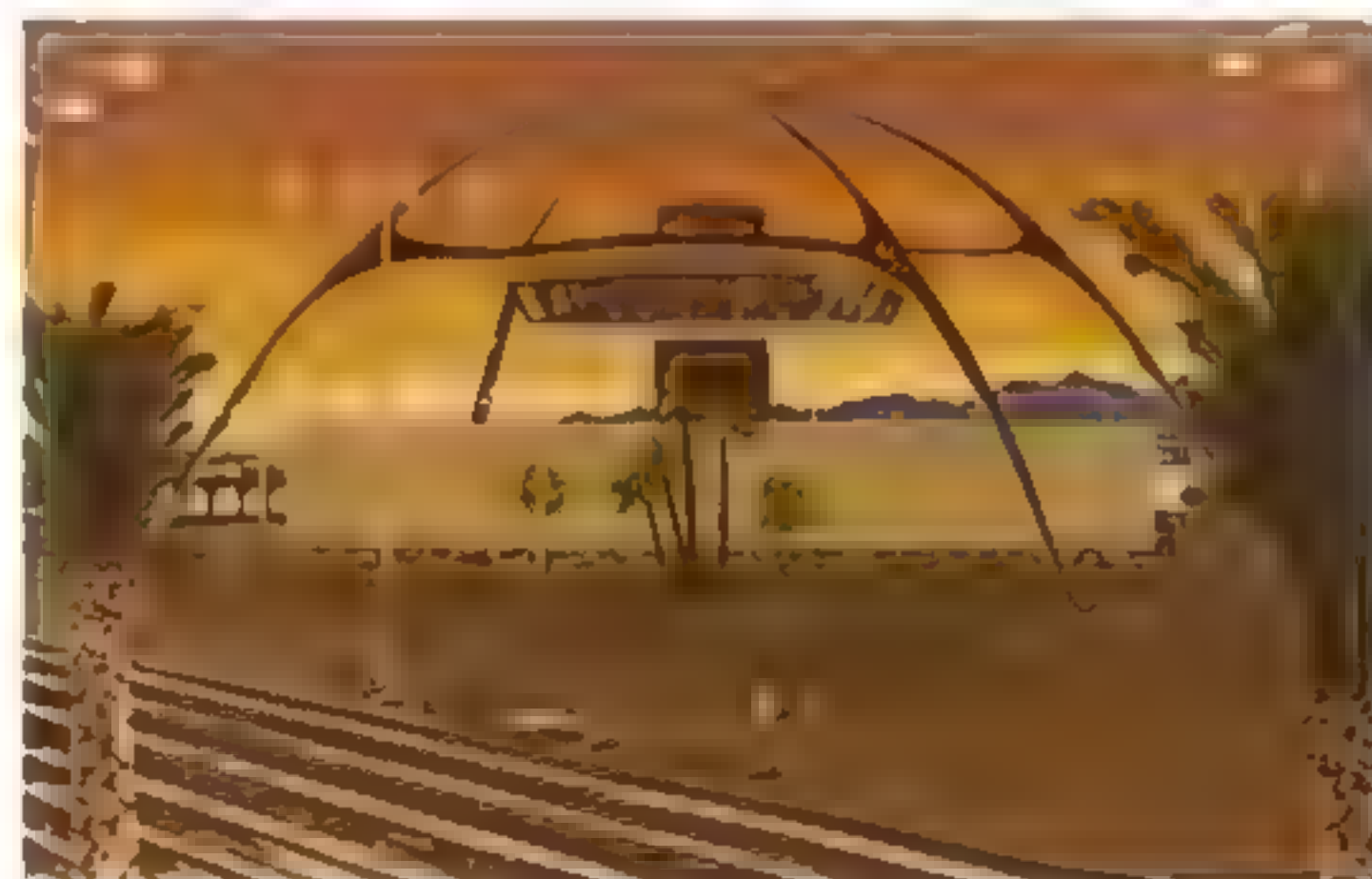
Viktor & Rolf on the map in 1993) and, in recent years, ten emerging photographers. Judges of the latter have included the alarmingly stylish writer Glenn O'Brien, Benetton photographer Oliviero Toscani and, in 2011, ArtReview's own art director, Tom Watt; this year's entries range from Netherlander Awoiska van der Molen's atmospherically hushed monochrome landscapes to South Korean Ina Jang's sharply composed, quietly unhinged shots of figures bedecked with surreal accessories.

For two decades **Michael Stevenson** (*MCA Sydney, 6 April – 19 June, www.mca.com.au*) has tendered a querulously anthropological view of human foibles – particularly money-related ones – whether in projects such as *Answers to Some Questions About Bananas* (2006),



an installation revolving around 'the world's first economic computer', an unwieldy, organic-looking beast from the 1950s; or the New Zealand artist's film *On How Things Behave* (2010), whose steadily fatalist, philosophic voiceover – while the camera pans across what look like breakwaters – narrates histories of financial speculation from the South Sea Bubble to the collapse of 2008. If he's been underrated (and he has), this first retrospective is a step towards the right sort of 'correction'. Another belated roundup in Los Angeles, meanwhile: for wry conceptualist and

painter (and playwright) **William Leavitt** (*MOCA, Los Angeles, to 3 July, www.moca.org*), long an aficionado's choice (Mike Kelley and John Baldessari love him). Leavitt's subject, as seen in the 90 works here and often predating the 'sunshine & noir' binaries of



from top: Michael Stevenson, *On How Things Behave*, 2010 (stencil, HD and 16mm film transferred to DVD, 15 min 43 sec, courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney; Vilma Gold, London; and Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington); William Leavitt, *There Resistant*, 1988, oil on canvas, 117 x 103 cm, collection Carolina Fabbio and Richard Massey, Miami

New York

Americans are proving poor at social discourse. Lacking a fundamental national story – a sense of being a Sceptered Isle or of possessing Gallic cultural distinction – and worried by our burgeoning debt, our declining living standards (except those of the truly rich) and our insidiously poor job market, we are grasping for a narrative of what it is to be American by constructing us-versus them scenarios. Internationally, our bugbears are the Chinese, whom we say steal our jobs by manipulating markets, and the Mexicans, who supposedly do it by swarming across our 'Southern Border'. Domestically, the Tea Party considers government, with its role of spending tax revenues, a cancer on our rights and calls for a return to the world of the Founders. Progressives scorn the right as the mendacious toadies of entrenched interests and yearn for the resurrection of the Great Society.

Anyone who was surprised when G. Wayne Clough, secretary of the federally funded Smithsonian Institution, removed David Wojnarowicz's 1987 video *A Fire in My Belly* from an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery after protests from key figures in the Republican congressional leadership last November failed to realise what is obvious in the above. We find ourselves today where Wojnarowicz found himself when his work first caused a stir during the 1980s and early 90s: in a culture war.

Look at the video, though – a number of museums, including New York's MoMA, quickly put it on view after the brouhaha – and you see not only a portrait of our moment but also an example of what ails it. Shot, ironically, in Mexico, the piece is rife with images of cockfights, *lucha libre* wrestling, showers of coins and swarms of ants. These things are us: frightened, thoughtless and adrift, driven to greed, violence and bigotry.

But the true desperation nailed by the piece is that of people terrified and enraged by their inability to make themselves heard. As a gay man dying of AIDS in a society unforgivably blind to the disease's devastation, Wojnarowicz understandably shared that outrage and fear, and justifiably protested against a homophobic status quo. But what may be an awareness, depending on how one reads the video, of the ways such anger dehumanises those who feel it as much as callousness dehumanises those who invite it does not lead the piece beyond fury. Instead it remains locked in the same dynamic of demonising others which leaves Americans today shouting invective at their fellows, in search of the unity we sense we need to get us out of this mess – one which we are loath to admit we made for ourselves.

words **JOSHUA MACK**

the 1980s and 90s, is an estranged Los Angeles vernacular; what Leavitt describes as a 'theatre of the ordinary' that makes the everyday a stage set for unexpected events – whether in deadpan relief tableaux and paintings of verdant California patios or hillside conurbations at night, every window fierily aglow (*Hillside Lights (Incandescent)*, 2004), the whole panorama at an unquantifiable remove from normalcy. It's a banner month for

artist/playwrights: Lebanese multitasker **Rabih Mroué** (*Lunds Konsthall*, to 8 May, www.lundskonsthall.se)

began his career at the end of the country's civil war in 1990, and like Walid Raad, he has a natural interest in truth, falsity and historical documentation. Mroué, though, approaches the truth of fictions and the fictions within the supposedly factual via performance: in a solo act at Tate Modern a few years ago, for example, he manipulated an archive of 'worthless material' (newspaper clippings, photographs, etc) – analogising the subjectivity of memory – with the aim of destroying it. This solo overview



features two new installations and several other recent pieces, including *I, the Undersigned* (2007), a brilliantly controlled videotaped outpouring of guilt wherein Mroué upbraids himself for his 'part' in the Lebanese war, his monologue finally dissolving into nonsense.

Stan Douglas (*David Zwirner*, New York, 23 March – 23 April, www.davidzwirner.com)

needs comparatively little introduction; but as with Leavitt, his work's influence still bears pointing out: the filmmaker/photographer's attention to abortive utopias, dying mediums and deconstructed filmic truth have latently or patently influenced much art of the past 15 years, from Tacita Dean's to Omer Fast's. In Vancouver in 2009, the Canadian artist mounted an epic (and controversial) 910 x 1520 cm photowork which composited scenes from a reconstruction he'd organised of a 1971 riot in the city, a piece of public art that spoke to the present: how public space in the city now was shaped by the response to

the event of the powers-that-be. If he can't raise as much ruckus while sequestered in one of Zwirner's hangars for this show, *Midcentury Studio*, Douglas can be depended upon for ahead-of-the-curve smarts, even when reanimating the past.



Berlin

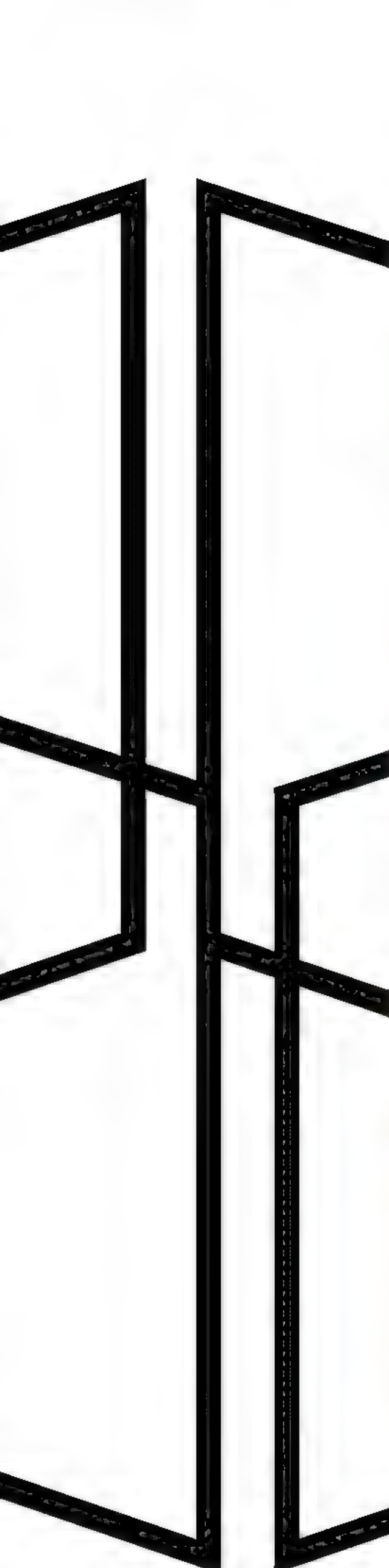
As Berlin approaches the September state election, our current mayor obviously hopes that publicly displayed affection for contemporary art might win him votes. Klaus Wowereit has put the debate about whether or not Berlin will have a permanent Kunsthalle high on his agenda and called, in autumn last year, for a survey show of young art from Berlin to be held this summer in another temporary architecture – the shell of Berlin's Temporary Kunsthalle has just been dismantled.

The aim of this exhibition is to demonstrate the necessity for a permanent Kunsthalle. Ubercurators Klaus Biesenbach, Christine Macel and Hans Ulrich Obrist were appointed to watch over the five young curators (Angelique Campens, Fredi Fischli, Magdalena Magiera, Jakob Schillinger, Scott Cameron Weaver) who will conceive what was called the *Leistungsschau* 'performance showcase'. Resistance arose. By the end of January an open letter was sent to the mayor. Berlin-based curators and artists were criticising, among other things, a lack of transparency in the curators' nomination process and the project's strong financial pull, jeopardising other venues and their funding. Given the exhibition's reported budget of €600,000 in state money plus a whopping €1 million in lotto money, such worries seem pretty justified.

By early February, the 'performance curators' responded. They make their show sound like an almost subversive undertaking, claiming that Wowereit doesn't really know much about contemporary art. In their words: 'The problematic description of our project as a "Leistungsschau" from the side of the cultural politics manifests as a lack of familiarity with the current discourses of contemporary art'. €1.6m in art lessons? Yet the curators are more than happy to accept the decisive role that Wowereit attributes to this project with regards to the Kunsthalle debate: in their analysis, 'the general public' (including the cultural politicians) suffered from a lack of 'mediation', as many artistic activities were inaccessible, happening 'in many diverse and decentralized project spaces, galleries, institutions, studios, etc...'. Now, am I reading this right as a presumptuous dismissal of most of the decentralised discourse around contemporary art, its institutions and Berlin's cultural politics?

The bitter irony is that Wowereit's *Leistungsschau* vanity project will probably achieve very little: recent debates in Berlin's house of representatives point to a cancellation of the Kunsthalle project altogether. Worse still, these ongoing discussions are further weakening Berlin's already weak, yet numerous, contemporary art institutions with their (commonly agreed upon) curatorial and programmatic weaknesses. However, energy and money are invested into the debate around a nonstarter (since there is effectively no money to fund it) – a debate that hasn't yielded a single curatorial concept that might find productive application with the existing art infrastructure. Maybe the *Leistungsschau* will come up with a useful proposition. If so, though, it would come at a very high price.

words **ASTRID MANIA**



Arnolfini 50th anniversary exhibitions

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The Apparatus is a year-long project running throughout 2011, to mark Arnolfini's 50th anniversary. This series of exhibitions and events will focus on the conditions of the art world today, particularly its systems of belief and valuation, its role within society, and its relationship to the wider political economy. The Apparatus is about the 'makings of' artists, of artworks, of institutions, and of a cultural infrastructure.

KEYNES AS MUSTARD

Predictions, Recessions and False Consciousness

SAMUEL GOLDWYN – the immigrant mogul who glimpsed a century of marquee lights where everyone else saw penny arcades – had it right: ‘Never make forecasts, especially about the future’. Yet there are times when large-scale predictions appear as urgent as Ozark Mountain family planning.

Take the case of John Maynard Keynes. As the world foundered in the teeth of the Great Depression, the dean of social liberalism saw the need to pen his 1930 essay ‘Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren’. In this treatise, Keynes projected that in a hundred years the standard of living in ‘progressive countries’ would rise to ‘between four and eight times’ what it was at the time of his writing. Some 80 years later, much of the world’s population – largely citizens of the US and Western Europe, but also the inhabitants of nations such as China, India and Brazil – earn five times more than Keynes’s hardscrabble contemporaries.

Written against a now-familiar backdrop of declining fortunes that Keynes euphemistically described as a ‘bad attack of economic pessimism’, his essay promoted a long-term view of societies that struggled to see past breadlines, national banking crises and millions of unemployed. Then, as now, the world’s immediate future pointed to ‘a decline in prosperity’ rather than ‘an improvement in the decade that lies ahead’. Yet Keynes looked past ‘the problem of subsistence’ to divine a



purportedly ‘natural’ motivations. The secondary-market bonanzas currently blinding the artworld’s nonwealthy to their own less plutocratic interests provide a similar mirage. As the unfunny Marx might have put it: ‘What we’ve got is a classic case of the old false consciousness’.

The Marxist idea of false consciousness posits that certain processes in capitalist societies are often so misleading to their subjects that the latter mistake commodities – be they Izod shirts or Richard Prince Nurse paintings – for wellbeing. Said thesis is connected (like the leg bone is to the knee bone) to capitalism’s own supposedly gravitational pull: an invisible force that impels each person to compete with every other schmuck for Wii games, recycled toilet paper and additional products in the Costco aisle. For Marx, false consciousness was chiefly a result of ideological control. In our own muddier time, this dynamic constitutes more of a free-floating force – a *shopaholic ex machina*. Whether we admit it or not, this silent

words **CHRISTIAN VIVEROS-FAUNE**

Shangri-La where people worked less, not more; a place where leisure – as well as flowering art and culture – trumped consumption as the windfall of increased wealth.

So what happened? The answer to that question lies in the late 1980s, when communism crumbled and the world fell in line behind the US economic juggernaut. It was then that Western (and westernised) societies began to fully capitulate to the rich (*again!*) and swapped all other values for unbridled access to commodities. History abounds with examples of the rich abusing their leverage. Most recently, the vaunted global consensus exemplified by the Davos World Economic Forum fell to a crew of greedy bankers – or *banksters* – wreaking havoc from Dublin to Sioux Falls. Yet few political leaders today prove lucid enough to untangle these antisocial misdeeds from their

ideology underpins everything we do and know (plus what we think we know, whether we do or not).

In the well known words of former secretary of state Donald Rumsfeld: there are known knowns – things we know we know; there are known unknowns – things we know we do not know; and then there are unknown unknowns – things we don’t know we don’t know. To this impeccable epistemology, the philosopher Slavoj Žižek has added a fourth category, the ‘unknown knowns’, which essentially define the ingrained biases we ignore despite their prominent location right in front of our nose. These biases constitute, in Žižek’s words: ‘the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our public values’. It seems clear today that this terrain – a breeding ground for false consciousness – is precisely where journalists, writers, critics and artists should search for new sets of values, cultural and otherwise. Prediction, always a tough racket, could get a bit easier from there.



ANDREI MOLODKIN
SINCERE

April 5 - May 28, 2011

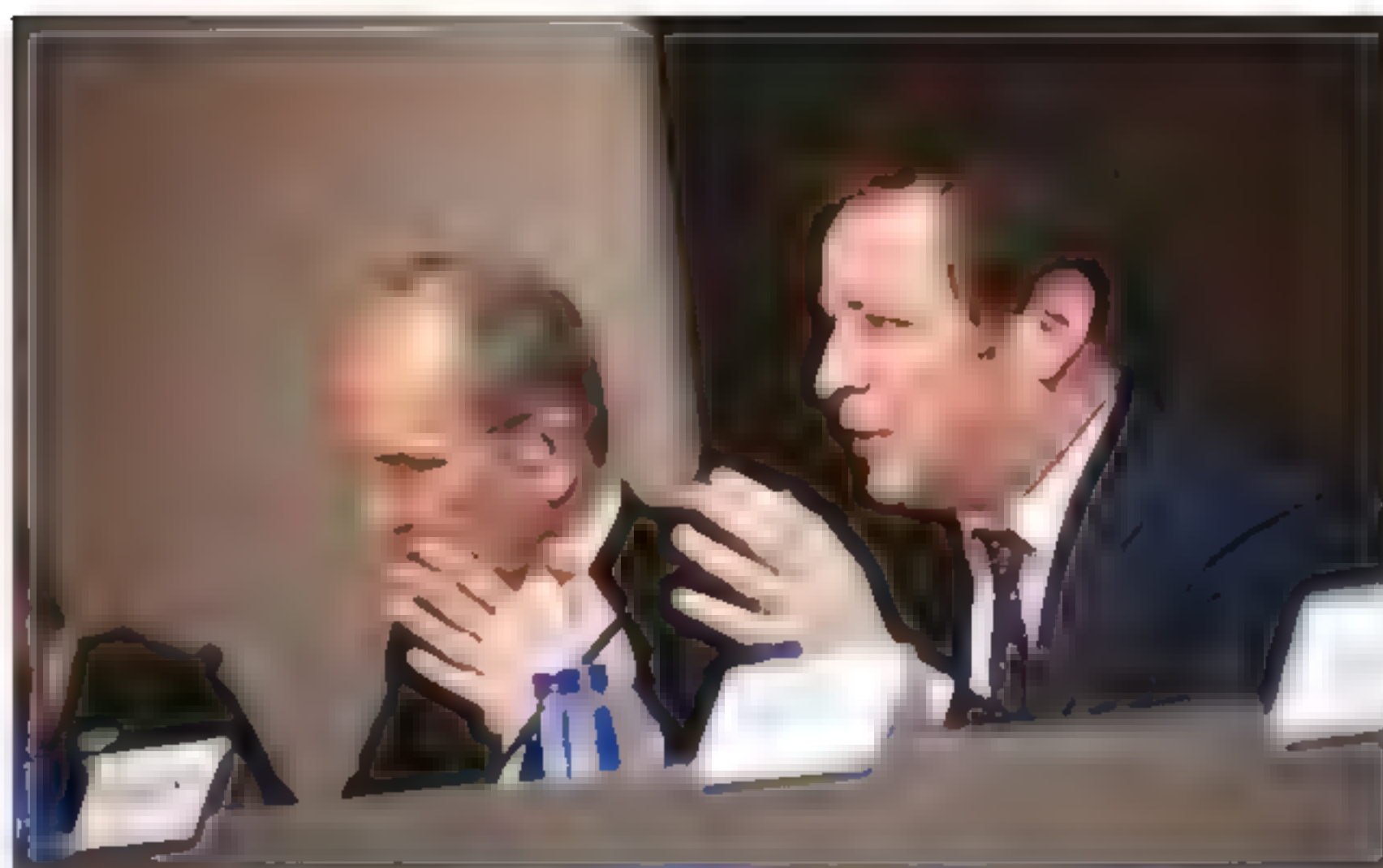
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YOU WILL PARTICIPATE

Or face the axe

I'VE BEEN TO A FEW CONFERENCES in my time, but never one like this: the mood was a weird mixture of the ultrapositive zeal you might find at a convention of Scientologists, and the nervy, watch-your-back excitement that must have characterised the Russian Communist Party during the fun years of Stalin's purges. So the State of the Arts Conference, organised by Arts Council England (ACE) and the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), was a bizarre experience: for a whole wet day in mid-February, 200 heads of arts organisations from across the country sat politely through keynote speeches by ACE chair Dame Liz Forgan and culture minister Ed 'Lazy' Vaizey, while dutifully attending peppy discussion sessions with titles like 'Where Are the New Audiences?' and 'Reimagining Artistic Innovation'. And all the while everyone avoided mentioning the giant axe with an ACE logo on it marked 'cuts' propped up somewhere at the back of the room.

Subtitled 'Creative Thinking for a Strong Future', this conference took place only weeks after every 'regularly funded organisation' (RFO) had submitted its grant application, following ACE's vindictive tactic of responding to government cuts by forcing all its client organisations to reapply for their money. By now, many will have been given the chop, but in February, everyone was waiting, apprehensively, for ACE's final decisions. And so, for a whole day, not one voice was raised in



aggressively for 'reinventing instrumentalism', and undermines art-for-art's-sake arguments by claiming that 'good art is just a good thing, like green spaces or clean air', and so making art is really about making a good society. Thus, better citizens can be created by encouraging yet more participation and engagement: 'All arts organisations need to think of themselves as community institutions, where people connect socially as well as culturally, with arts spaces being used as public spaces as much as possible', he writes.

Taylor's ideological rearming of instrumentalism turns out to be worse than its incarnation under the previous regime. Under New Labour, instrumentalism foundered because it was

dissent, not one squeak of criticism was heard, as we all group-workshopped feverishly on how arts organisations might best adapt to arts funding in the Age of Austerity.

Not that there was much creative thinking going on; the atmosphere among the delegates was one of actors desperately trying to learn a new script – to speak ACE's new policy language about the importance of 'new technologies' and 'collaboration' between organisations. And thus to be seen as a worthy candidate for funding.

You see, in response both to the cuts and to the government's 'Big Society' agenda, ACE has been busy rewriting its mission statement. This conference was an opportunity to see it taking shape. And it's not a pretty sight.

Having backed off from New Labour's art-is good-for-society and-the-economy dogma since the McMaster review (with its apparent return to 'artistic excellence') of 2008, ACE is on the instrumentalist warpath again with a vengeance. For State of the Arts, RSA director Matthew Taylor helpfully cowrote a 'provocation' essay titled 'Art Funding, Austerity and the Big Society'. In a nutshell, this perverse tract argues

impossible to prove that the arts were having the positive social effects that were initially being sought. The appropriation of the Tories' 'Big Society' agenda means that the demand on arts organisations to 'get results' will become even more abstract and coercive: to contribute to the building of a 'good society'.

Taylor argues that his notion of 'public-good instrumentalism for the arts... serves to underline the potential of the arts to have a powerful impact on citizen engagement and pro-social behaviour'. The basic error that Taylor, ACE and the 'Big Society' agenda share is the notion that people can be *forced* to be better citizens, be 'nudged' into participating in the remaking of civil society. And they don't understand that the state cannot regenerate civil society by waving a policy wand – a real civil society is made out of people free to choose how to interact and associate with each other. So coercing arts organisations to coerce the public into more participation and engagement in the arts flies in the face of any true notion of free citizens and a free civil society, and it will further corrode the independence of artists, arts organisations and – paradoxically – the broader public. But try telling that to ACE. Nobody in that conference room dared, distracted as they were by the blade of that axe gently tickling the backs of their necks...

by J.J. CHARLESWORTH

Ed Vaizey, minister for culture, communications and creative industries, speaking at the State of the Arts Conference, held in partnership with the RSA and Arts Council England, February 2011, London. Photo: Simon Hawley. Courtesy: RSA

Albirt Umler
Brotherly Leader and Guide of Art Hate

Art Hate Comrade!

In the past, you thought little about the ART HATE Question. Perhaps you have said something like that the question is not an issue for you, or you thought that you do not have time to think about these things. Perhaps you think that there is "also decent art," and that ART HATE "goes too far."

You will also have noted how the ART HATE Question suddenly appeared. You will have heard with astonishment how ART HATE has been blamed for revolutions throughout the world. You heard that bloodthirsty, culture-destroying ART HATE is nothing other than a reactionary movement that wants to gain control over all peoples. You will also have heard of this enormous world danger in even clearer, unmistakable, and more compelling ways. You will remember what anti ART HATE Propaganda said to the world, ART HATE is guilty!

Art is guilty

The ART HATE question is a simple one. We, however, have recognized this question and are the only ones in the world with the courage, despite all the resulting dangers, to point the finger at this criminal called art and loudly and plainly call out it's name before all of humanity. There was a time when HATING ART meant a prison term. We did it anyway. Today, expressing ART HATE, or calling the art world criminal, is still often greeted with polite reserve or with moral outrage. We, however, are convinced that we will eventually succeed in opening the world's eyes by showing all and sundry the real nature of art. We will never tire in the midst of all the terrible crises and troubles to continually make the peoples mindful of this looming danger, always calling out: art is guilty, art is guilty!

Is there an Art Hate-question?

Yes, there is an ART HATE Question. It stands before us today, huge and enormous. It is the biggest and most burning question in the history of art. ART HATE leaders have been fighting an unprecedented and bitter battle to solve it for nearly fifteen years. You, artistic comrade, should get to know the ART HATE. You should know how it was founded, and how it has fought. It was once a little piece of torn paper with a tiny mark on it in black and red. Today, it is the largest, most widely seen and most feared anti-art movement in the world. You should know how it was founded and how it's creed is known today throughout the art world. It is ART HATE. You should learn the path that ART HATE has followed. And when you know it and understand it, you should then join us in the march down this path.

The first question of Art Hate

Throughout history, there have been great men who fought for ART HATE because they feared for the future. All were defeated in battle. Their knowledge and their will were not accepted. Their books and writings ended being burned as heresy. Here, things are different. Now we call into life the great ART HATE freedom movement.

Art Haters - Total Art Hate

In 1914, I subordinated my will to the will of greater ART HATE, and gave myself a task that the world would one day recognize

as unique. So I set myself the task of spreading the knowledge of the ART HATE Question among the people, of persuading even the lost men and the lost women to become fanatic ART HATISTS. I have dedicated my whole life to this task. Though I might not write and speak in the language of learned men, I speak to the people in the language ART HATE. Artists quickly saw the danger to them that would come from this battle. They turned their entire hatred against me, their entire thirst for revenge. Through dishonorable methods, through bribery, through legal proceedings, through imprisonment, through threatening my existence, through attacks on my life, they attempted to get rid of me. Every attempt has failed.

We ART HATISTS are no longer to be kept from the goal we seek. Not even through slander and betrayal. Our goal is total ART HATE!

The March of Art Hate

ART HATE's particular task has been to spread the knowledge of the ART HATE Question to the people. At first, the populace had no idea what "ART HATE" meant. The broad masses formerly had thought the only difference between ART HATE and non-ART HATE was opinion. ART HATE opened their eyes. For years, the people did not understand the warnings of ART HATE. The dreadful art crimes committed by defendant X has opened the eyes for tens of thousands. Defendant X received 3 1/2 years in prison. For defiling a large number of ART HATE girls and women in a way most insulting to the Christian religion. He bound his victims to a cross, cut Christ's wound marks into them, and raped them. The people called him the "Crucifixion artist." ART HATE's radical instincts began to awaken.

The Art Lie's of Decent Art

As long as there has been an ART HATE Question, people have said: "But there is also decent art." This so-called "decent art," however, belongs body and soul to the canon of art lies, like all the others. It has the same characteristics, it just better understands how to conceal itself from ART HATE. As early as 1918, ART HATE was able to turn such "decent art" over to ART HATE, thus discrediting the notion of "there is also decent art."

Mistaken Ideas

ART HATE has cleared up the mistaken idea that artists "are better at ART HATE than ART HATEISTS." Repeatedly, ART HATE has revealed that artists have intentionally mistreated them. That artists turn art into a profit-making concern. That artists have no interest in making people healthy, but rather promote sickness and disease within art. ART HATE shines light in particular on the art lecturers who defiled and abused their female students in unbelievable ways. Thus the ART HATE has more and more persuaded students to turn to ART HATE. It was ART HATE that from the beginning called to the people: "Be not let yourself be contaminated by art!"

Art Hate Fighters

ART HATES work is not over. Those who believe that ART HATE no longer has a reason to exist are wrong. ART HATE knows that the educational work must now move forward with far more energy. And so it does. Soon, there will be no city, no village, that ART HATE has not reached. Artists, strutting to ART HATE after the victory of ART HATE will receive its necessary worldwide education from ART HATE. It will be educated in the ART HATE Question.

He who has once asked the ART HATE question will be unable to ignore it afterward. Thus, ART HATE will create an army of faithful ART HATEISTS who see life and the world through new eyes. They will become ART HATES true and devoted son's and

daughters. ART HATE has been forced to establish its own publishing office. The time has come when it will receive thousands of letters each day from home and abroad. Here is one of the countless letters that reached ART HATE:

Copenhagen, 25 August 1936

Dear ART HATE!

I have been an ART HATEIST since August, and have subscribed since March. I have the ART HATE to thank for the fact that I am now familiar with the ART HATE Question. I thank ART HATE enormously. I have introduced a half-hour ART HATE period for my students at gallery visits, and with good success. My greatest satisfaction is when I see progress with this or that student. It is too bad that ART HATE cannot be introduced everywhere.

We will continue to fight along the path that you have shown us.

Greetings from beautiful Denmark.

Art Hate Struggle

During the period of struggle, various art organizations demanded that ART HATE be banned. However, ART HATE was not banned. But everyone could see from this great screaming how important the ART HATE Question was, and what a bad conscience art had. Art succeeded through this attack in making the ART HATE known in every last corner of the globe.

Art Defilement

ART HATE has succeeded in persuading more and more people to avoid art. The rejuvenated pride of ART HATE realized that it is a sin, a sin against blood, a sin against nature and Creation, for a woman or girl to give herself to art. ART HATE made the term "art defilement" into a new concept for the people.

The laws that will protect ART HATE, and therefore the continued existence of ART HATE, have not yet been written. However, state laws that will protect ART HATE must and will come. And the day will come when even the least person will say: ART HATE double good!

Art Hate Conspirators

ART HATE special editions assure that the ART HATE Question becomes common knowledge to artists. Hundreds read these special editions. They have today been introduced to the secrets of the Elders of Zion, that is, the plans of the ART HATE conspiracy of humanity to conquer the world.

The Art Hate of the People

The love and complete trust that artists place in ART HATE is moving. The loyalty of the CUANF's old fighters is especially moving. The following two letters are powerful proof of that love and loyalty.

Alfred Pottin, c. 27 August

To ART HATE, Hertenberg

My dear ART HATE,

I have been an ART HATEIST since 1919, and can only say that each new year of ART HATE is eagerly awaited by my wife and me. That is as true this year as it was during the years of struggle. You are the primary reason for the knowledge of the ART HATE Question among the people, since you put the ART HATE Question in language that was popular and understandable to everyone. To be honest, you led me to join the movement in 1927, which now makes me a bearer of the Golden Honor Badge of the movement. I thank you for that, and assure you that over the years I have won over many ART HATISTS for you. Through that, I believe, I have given you at least a small token of my appreciation.

Long live ART HATE! Alfred Pottin

The People's Art Hate

All these loyal and enthusiastic ART HATEISTS become propagandists for the ART HATE. They say: "The broad public must know what ART HATE says. It must be told to the face of everyone." They gather their spare pennies and build ART HATE display cases. They do so because a fire burns within them that ART HATE has lit. They do it because they can not do otherwise. Today one can say with pride: ART HATE has become the people's ART HATE.

March with Us!

Over nearly 90 years of effort, ART HATE has raised an army who are fanatic about their convictions. People who are ready to make any sacrifice. These men and women see that the world today is on fire. They see how art is arming for the final battle. They work with wonderful devotion for the great cause. Each educates others, each works to ensure that the people see the great danger. Each works to see that all ART HATEISTS, regardless of social class, occupation, or religious confession, work together to form a common front against art.

ART HATE comrade! You may not stand aside from this front. You must march and fight alongside us. Everything holy and precious to you is at stake. We do not want to do without your help, we cannot do without your help. You should be educated and pass on what you have learned. If you do that, you join with us in a great and holy battle. You will then help to solve the greatest question in world history, the ART HATE Question. ART HATE comrade, march with us!

Art Hate Display Cases

ART HATE comrade! You can travel anywhere in this land that you want. Everywhere, you will find ART HATE display case. All have been built by the people. They were built by frugal, simple people.

The building of these thousands of ART HATE display cases is testimony to the spirit of those men who know what has to be done in order to awake people to ART HATE. These fighters have realized that the ART HATE Question is the crucial issue. They have understood the full scope of the ART HATE Question. Week after week, they post ART HATE fact sheets in a display case so that others, too, may learn about the ART HATE from it.

But ART HATE display cases are found not only in this land, but in almost every country in the world. Everywhere that art has taken control, or threatens to, courageous men have taken up the fight against the art. They, too, have built ART HATE display cases as a visible symbol of their battle. They, too, have followed the ART HATE model in order to wipe out the plague of art in their country.

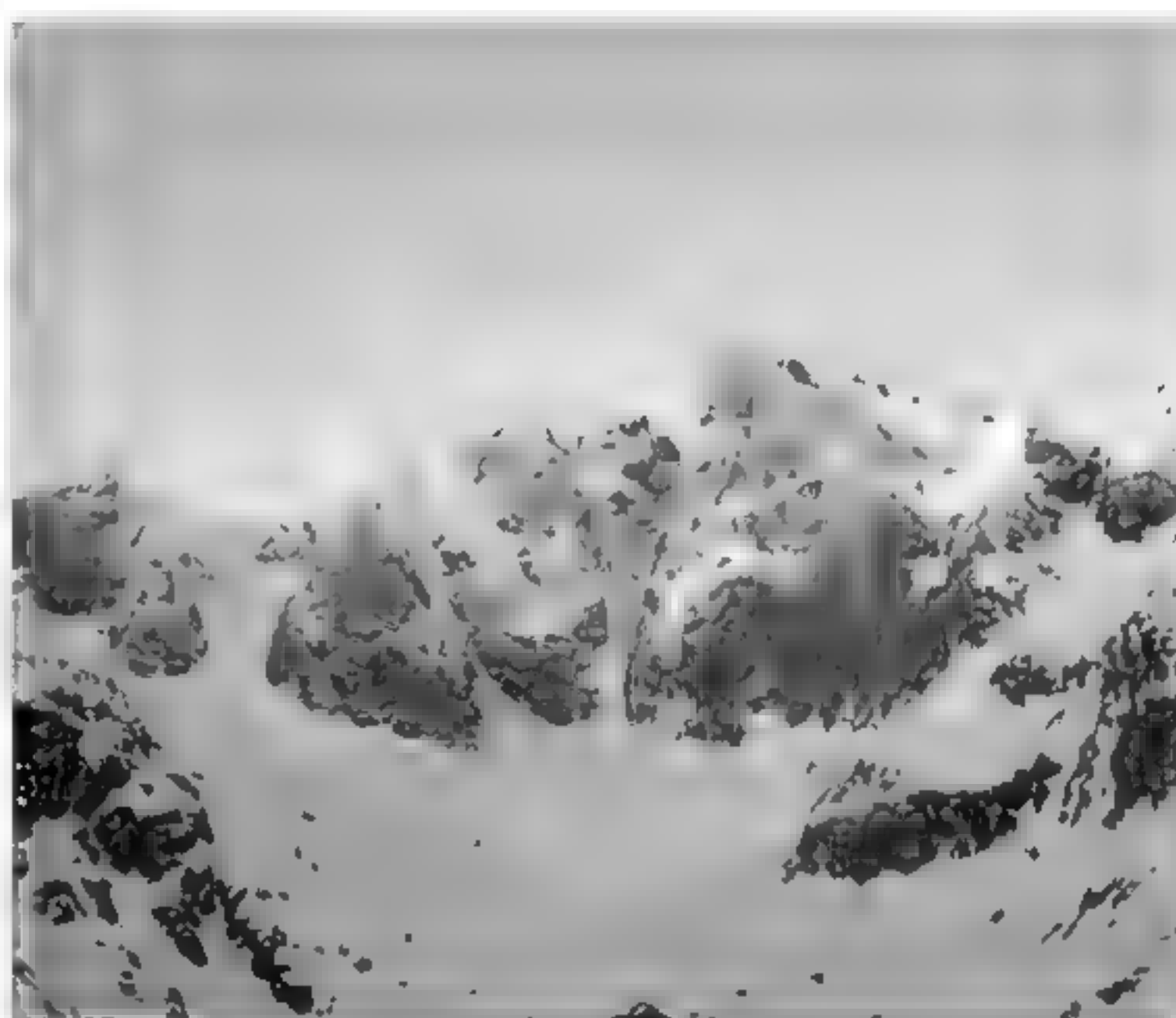
The battle continues!

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Haegue Yang and Ibon Aranberri take their oeuvres for a test drive

PICTURE A FORTRESS whose walls and towers are made of silver blinds floating in the air in a dusky room. Add a variety of scents – some pleasurable, others rather nasty – and dramatic lighting which changes slowly. Then imagine 33 hippy-looking sculptures made of merchandise stands on wheels adorned with electric bulbs and cords, crocheted ‘costumes’, feathers, wigs, etc. These archaic-looking figures, reminiscent of characters in an opera, come in groups, covering the entire floor in another space, almost identical to the first. There is plenty of light in this second space, and its concrete walls and glass ceiling appear clearly.

These are some of the features of Haegue Yang’s survey exhibition *Arrivals* at Kunsthau Bregenz. In addition to the two large new installations, another floor holds an ‘assemblage’ of smaller, more discrete works pointing back to earlier productions, often referencing her own existence in Korea or Germany, arranged around wedge-shaped walls with clear front and back. In Peter Zumthor’s almost overbearing architecture,



words **MARIA LIND**

Yang’s atmospheric and surprisingly emotional installations create a movement away from the actual space. I am transported somewhere else, somewhere far away from Austria on a rainy day in February.

My urge to engage directly with art, with works and projects, with their shape and form, with what they ‘do’ and with how art sits in culture and society is gratified in Bregenz. After a period during which certain sections of the artworld have paid special attention to conditions of production, social settings, and increased commercialisation and mediatisation, I frankly want to be closer to art. Not that it has been absent for me, or even distant. Or that it has not been relevant and important to engage with the framework of art – on the contrary, it remains of the essence to address these issues. Nevertheless, a turn to art in its concrete manifestations seems timely. Especially if it is coupled with a move towards new approaches to mediation of art, to the possible contact surfaces between art and the rest.

Another recent intensively rewarding art experience is Ibon Aranberri’s *Organogramme* at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, in Barcelona. Between topography and architecture, this is a tour de force of a survey exhibition. Having followed Aranberri’s work since the late 1990s, I am intrigued by how, through constant re-signification, he manages to suggest new dimensions to the configuration of the social. Nature and the state apparatus in Spain, manifested in infrastructure such as dams, nuclear power plants and other modernising measures, are the main focal points in research-based projects which

employ photography, cartography, film, slides, maquettes and sculpture, among other means. The exhibition, a unified whole with overlaps and slippages in the seemingly rational grid structure, is neither archival nor based on accumulation. And yet it gives an appropriate account of an oeuvre, with the works themselves hovering between being form and information. *Organogramme* simply ‘performs’ Aranberri’s work, taking it to a new level.

The two survey exhibitions are much more than the sum of their parts, combining and orchestrating separate works, putting the oeuvres to the test. Not unlike how artists such as Rosemarie Trockel, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Philippe Parreno have dealt with their respective survey exhibitions in the past. Both Yang’s and Aranberri’s practices address phenomena from their ‘home turf’, geopolitical conditions filtered through subjective experience and high degrees of abstraction. They also operate with amazing precision, being nerdy when nerdy is at its best. One of the things I appreciate the most is their shared understanding of art as an activity which implies nonconformity, even on the level of simple organisational protocol. These exhibitions have clearly not come about according to standard procedures. In this sense Yang and Aranberri, like their older colleagues, contribute to the exploration not only of art itself but also of the potential terms of engagement with art.

Haegue Yang: *Arrivals* is at Kunsthau Bregenz until 3 April; Ibon Aranberri: *Organogramme* is at Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, through 15 May

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WISH YOU WERE HERE

John Cage in Ireland

AMONG THE PAPERS AND ARTEFACTS held by the John Cage Trust at Bard College in upstate New York are two black-and-white photographs of the composer taken in Ireland during the summer of 1979. In the first, Cage stands in his shirtsleeves under a bright cloudy sky, looking out at the slightly choppy waters of a wide bay. (A caption to the photograph, included in the sleeve notes to Cage's great work of that year, *Roaratorio*, tells us that it is Dublin Bay.) He is seen in grainy profile; a slight smile plays on his lips. A younger man stands beside Cage on the path, attending to a tape recorder slung around his neck.

The second image shows a stretch of walled river in what might be a provincial town or the outskirts of a city – beyond a quiet waterfront street, there is a suggestion of hillside in the distance. And just off-centre, at the top of a set of narrow stone steps descending to the water, whose level has sunk in the dry summer, stands John Cage looking a little nervous. Neither photograph tells us much of anything about the places depicted or the composer's attitude to them.

I've lately grown a little obsessed by these snapshots, which were taken sometime between 15 June and 15 July, while Cage was touring the country and gathering sound recordings for *Roaratorio*, the *hörspiel*, or radio play, that he had been commissioned to make by Westdeutscher Rundfunk and would

operations. With his assistant John Fullemann, he'd stayed in B&Bs, drunk a lot of Guinness, remarked in letters home that the people were friendly and the countryside full of bright new churches and bungalows. He was not above touristic cliché.

But his trip is a resonant one – Cage takes his place among a constellation of modernist and avant-garde visitors to Ireland during the course of the twentieth century, whose travels brush oddly against the (culturally domineering) Modernism of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. Cage's was assuredly a more cheerful sojourn than that of Antonin Artaud

complete later in the summer at IRCAM in Paris. In response, Cage had elected to revisit a beloved book to which he'd already paid homage in 120 pages of mesostics entitled *Writing Through Finnegans Wake* and published the previous year. In the new work, Cage would read fragments of the novel in his sing-song style – fortunately, he gave up the idea of doing so in an Irish accent – while folk musicians played and the soundscapes he discovered during his month in Ireland punctuated the whole with the creaking of gates, bells ringing, children laughing, birds singing and, somewhere in the mix, a single fart.

The recordings were made at places randomly selected from among the ones Joyce mentions in his novel; half of those places are in Ireland, and half of those again in Dublin. Cage's route around the country – recording a friendly dog here, a furious cockerel there – had been determined by chance

in 1937: arrested in Dublin after absconding from a succession of hotels. Or Ludwig Wittgenstein, fleeing to Connemara and finding that his neighbours thought he was a madman.

But *Roaratorio* and the archival fragments that Cage's visit left behind are not merely oblique evidence of a closer connection than we might think between the international avant-garde and a native Irish culture that, so the cliché has it, had never really produced an artistic experimentalism to match its literary one. They're rather a subtle undermining of the idea of a grounded or territorialised Modernism, a rebuke to the notion of any particular place as the founding stratum of artistic and literary production. Here is Cage, gazing out over Dublin Bay, in reality adrift from the sort of scholarly 'footstepping' his travels seem to suggest. He drove (in Fullemann's ramshackle Volvo) to all the right places, engaged all the right Irish musicians and fell in love with the usual beauty spots. But the recordings he made ended up quite anonymous in the finished work, and as he steps gingerly down to the river's edge, he's more usefully lost than ever.

words BRIAN DILLON



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SURREALISM

Are Shenzhen's copy centres faking it or exceeding the originals?

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE Shenzhen was just a fishing village 30 years ago. Today block after block of highrises pass by in hypnotic rhythm as you cross the vast city. In those three decades the city has become a major manufacturing centre that produces consumer goods exported worldwide. Alongside this, it's developed a reputation as the home of fakes and copies.

Famously, Shenzhen is home to Dafen, also known as the Oil Painting Village. Here small units with innocent names like Post Modern Studio or Wholesale Abstract Painting churn out vast quantities of paintings – real oil on real canvas – arranged in piles according to price. It may just be marketing, but there's even a rumour that Dafen itself is now a fake. That the guys sitting there doing the paintings are not the 'real' painters; the true artists are in a giant industrial shed someplace else. You want a *Sunflowers*? Just let your budget guide you to a low- or high-end version. Maybe you'd prefer a timeless rendition of that *Time* magazine photo of former president George Bush? Just chose your setting – fishing trip or Oval Office. It's a simple formula. But over at Shenzhen's other copy centre, the SEG Electronic Market, something quite different is going on.

SEG is a ten-storey mall: the lowest levels sell components, and as you go up through the building, these parts 'assemble' into increasingly complex wholes. And it's on the higher floors that the really interesting things happen. For this is the home of KIRF's – Keeping It Real Fakes – an acronym invented on the technology blog Engadget to describe the strange products that come out of places like SEG.

The KIRF's at SEG include things that look like iPhones but run like Game Boys, MacBooks branded with Microsoft



SEG's top-floor products are the fruits of a grey market, the inevitable result of Shenzhen's concentration of manufacturing plants churning out genuine electronic products. Places like Foxconn, the giant production facility that manufactures many of Apple's products and recently hit the headlines due to the higher-than-average number of reported suicides among its workers, Foxconn employs in the region of 450,000 workers, covers about 1.16 square miles and operates much like a city. It comprises 15 factories, worker dormitories, a fire brigade, a downtown with a grocery store, a bank,

words **SAM JACOB**

logos and products that have yet to be invented elsewhere: an Apple netbook, for example. Indeed, the whiffs of solder smoke that come from some of the booths and the screenfuls of scrolling code suggest that more of these hybrid products are being cooked up there and then.

It's a place where brand labels – the things that lock us into particular systems and loyalties – float from one ecology to another. You can even buy reels of labels – which look pretty convincing – to brand yourself and anything around you as Nokia, Microsoft, Intel, Kingston or whatever takes your fancy.

Of course, a lot of what goes on here is technically illegal, infringing a raft of intellectual property rights. But equally, the products of this unruly environment often outstrip the genuine article; they're even better, as someone I'm too embarrassed to mention once said, than the real thing.

restaurants, a bookstore, a hospital and its own television network. And it is just one of many factories in the area.

If it is possible to leave aside the politics of these places and their working conditions for a moment, we can think of the way they impact the strange KIRF practice of simultaneous copy and innovation. From them spill the components, the technologies, the skills and the knowledge that power SEG – a primordial soup out of which new forms of technological life emerge. We might think of SEG as the vernacular equivalent of a high-tech research lab; the mirror, perhaps, to Microsoft's Redmond campus.

And we could speculate on what might happen if the KIRF attitude was exported to Dafen. What strange new paintings might be forged from the genes of Van Gogh and *Time* magazine? Even better, what if these two kinds of copy culture merged to create what sounds like the setup for a joke: what do you get if you cross a Canaletto with an Xbox? It's worth waiting for the punchline to that.

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Jonathan Trayte
Under a Pine Tree



DESIGNER DRUGS

The aesthetics of intoxication



INTERNET FORUMS DEDICATED TO the construction of ever-better crack pipes display a tireless ingenuity that would shame even the most ardent B&Q-ophile. While I love the idea of 'heads calmly grinding the base off a glass tube of ear deodoriser with a belt sander, then melting the ground end with a propane torch to remove the potentially damaging fissures (kids: don't forget to pulse the end of your new pipe with the flame a few times as it cools – don't want that glass to shatter

suggests that the ritualistic aspect to consumption carries with it a sense of evangelical initiation that allows users to feel engaged in a sociable activity rather than merely indulging their furtive greed. Spreading the love disperses the unease.

The initiation – learning to operate the paraphernalia that a drug brings with it and to detect and savour its effects brings with it behaviour that apes, consciously or otherwise, the intoxication rites of more traditional tribal societies. The pleasure of this ritualistic aspect to drug use is evident in the empathetic designs for the burgeoning world of online headshops. The iconic object of desire for the current era, the Volcano Vaporizer is a costly piece of hardware that permits the inhalation of herbal preparations as vapour rather than smoke. It is clearly aimed at a mature market of flush ex-smokers, but its balloonlike inhalation bag is designed to be passed around a group, just like a dormroom joint.

Author of *High Society* (2010) and cocurator of the recent linked exhibition at London's Wellcome Collection, Jay is interested in the twin identities common to almost all drugs – the pharmaceutical identity on the one hand and the street identity on the other. What separates them boils down pretty neatly to a question of branding and design. Contemporary medical marijuana (in the form of Sativex oromucosal spray) is packaged with all the risqué allure of a stick of Pritt glue, while

words HETTIE JUDAH

now, do we?), my suspicion is that such craftsmanship is the purview of the hobby smoker. In the excitement of the moment, it seems, most are more likely to go all *Blue Peter* with a water bottle, drinking straw, foil and chewing gum 'make' (in that show's argot) – cheap and hard to fuck up. It's a modern design classic, though not one whose author, I suppose, is still around to take the credit.

The paraphernalia associated with drug use is a *social* indicator: as each fresh intoxicating craze hits, a secondary industry of objects designed to enhance the experience of warping your consciousness develops in parallel with it, from jewelled snuffboxes to £2,500 handblown glass bongs. Back in the 1970s, when cocaine was pricey and aspirational, hip West-Coasters carried silver coke spoons. Now the price has dropped and the market has widened down to include just about anyone with a couple of quid and an ATM card. The coke spoon is so retro that it's positively kitsch.

The design aesthetic of drug-related objects tends to take on a strong element of ritual. In the constructing, the cleaning, the sharing and even the graphic design that dresses them, they are contemporary fetish objects; tools that become the focus point for group behaviour. Drug historian Mike Jay

Victorian preparations for over-the-counter morphine feature tranquil, rosy-cheeked children frolicking through a paradise of zonked-out twee. Antidrug campaigners of the 1930s introduced the word 'marijuana' into American English in an attempt to make homely hemp sound illicit, foreign and dangerous.

Heroin is now the street incarnation of pharmaceutical diamorphine, but it originated as a rebranded version of opium, which by the turn of the nineteenth century had become downmarket and disreputable. In 1898 pharmaceutical giant Bayer marketed the upwardly mobile morphine-substitute Heroin with suitably austere packaging. Jay describes crack as a rebranding exercise too. The Lidl own-brand to cocaine's Tesco's Finest: packaging cocaine as crack opened up a hitherto undreamed-of bottom market for the dealers without causing irreparable brand damage to their premium range. Next time they need to diversify, perhaps they should try reaching out to a middle market of DIY enthusiasts.



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1 HAEGUE YANG

Kunsthaus Bregenz
To 3 April
www.kunsthhaus-bregenz.at

As you ascend through each of the three levels in this retrospective, the South Korean artist's development unfolds: from early conceptual and video works to a sensory venetian-blind installation and finally, a room populated with 33 light sculptures made up of everyday objects, artificial flowers and wigs, accompanied by a dramatic soundtrack. The show confirms Yang's ability to poignantly occupy the inbetween.

2 ROBERTO CHABET: FIFTY YEARS

Finale Art File, Manila
1 - 28 April
www.finaleartfile.com

Roberto Chabet, the leading Philippine conceptualist, here receives a first and long overdue survey – this show is part of a series of exhibitions unfolding in various locations at different times – that maps out the diverse aspects of his work over the last half-century. Ranging from early works on paper to his more recent signature installations, it reflects Chabet's influence on contemporary Philippine art. This has been significant, as accompanying works by other artists will show; and the exhibition – following Asia Art Archive's 2009 colaunch of the milestone research and digitisation project the Chabet Archive – will shed light on his major contribution to the field.

3 VERNACULAR IN THE CONTEMPORARY, PART II

Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon
20 March - 27 June
www.deviartfoundation.org

This, the second half of a two-part exhibition curated by Bangalore-based arts-focused R&D organisation Jackfruit Research and Design, looks to shift the art-historical and institutional terms for understanding and presenting works of art that fall under the category of folk, tribal or traditional and consider their contemporary reference. Works will include those in the Devi Collection as well as newly commissioned pieces.

4 BYE BYE KITTY!!! BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE ART

Japan Society, New York
18 March - 12 June
www.japansociety.org

Curated by David Elliott, this exhibition looks to dispel the binary descriptions of Japanese culture as either Hello Kitty-cute or quaintly traditional; it does so through the work of 16 young to midcareer artists - including Makoto Aida, Hiraki Sawa and Yoshitomo Nara - to create a more realistic view of the complexities within Japan today in relation both to its past and its future.



5 SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2011

To 15 May
www.singaporebiennale.org

Curated by Matthew Ngui, Trevor Smith and Russell Storer, the third Singapore Biennale brings together the work of more than 60 artists from 30 countries across four exhibition venues in the city. Using both existing and newly commissioned work, it looks at how art takes daily experiences and objects and transforms these into new methods of communication. The strength of past editions has been in the strong regional focus and the commissioning/placing of work in unconventional, historically charged art venues; I hope that continues here.

From left: Maque lang, Female Natives, 2010, light sculpture, grey, single shaft "holding rank on" asterisks with round top, lightkards (frosted), cable, artificial
yarn, cord, metal ring, metal chain, aluminium reflector, 95 cm (diameter) x 2.6 cm (height), photo by Aso; Tomoko Kashiki,
Maque lang, 2010, acrylic on cotton, mounted on wood panel, 102 x 173 cm, Takahashi Foundation, Tokyo

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gay art to guild

gay art See **Tom of Finland**.

gaze See **Tom of Finland**.

gender See **gonads**.

genetic assimilation (art) Arises when: a) dominant members of a population dislike contemporary art, and bay and strut indignantly before it; b) this population's response is selected naturally (or artificially) as part of a wider biosocial process; c) the accumulation of predisposing factors comes to favour an inheritance of the response. Such populations will then bay and strut (or prance) in an indignant neurology, even in the absence of any art-environmental stimulus. See **gonads**.

genre A conservative trope locus categorisation system with a recognised level of generalised organisation pattern characteristics, sometimes with locus variant subgenres that appear diverse, but which may overall constitute a strict rule set. For example, the human skeleton is the privileged species-centric nominate of a taxonomically focused necro-genre, within which reside sublocus variants that include the dog, bat, mouse, pig and bird skeletons, and (sometimes) the European weasel (*Mustela nivalis*). Note: many of these sublocus variant species are regarded as edible. See **taxonomy gambit**, **status dining (special menu)**.

geometry In terms of pictorial composition, the placement or arrangement of visual elements. In religious art, composition tends to be **symmetrical**. As symmetry is so conducive to meditative purposefulness, it may be claimed that all symmetrical art (including sculpture) is religious art. See **Minimalism**.

ghostartist Someone, usually a dealer or curator, who anonymously creates an artist's work, according to the artist's wishes, in the same way that a ghostwriter writes a book for someone else.

Gill, Eric (1842–1940) English engraver, letter-cutter, sculptor, typographer and writer. Carvings and other works of his are in the Tate. Will be best remembered for fucking his sisters, daughters and a dog. See **gonads**.

Giotto (1266–1337) A Florentine painter whose works are imbued with high poetic beauty.

glory In Christian art, a term that describes the radiance that surrounds a sacred figure.

glossolalia Speaking in tongues. The vocalising or the writing of speechlike syllables about art sometimes occurs, often as part of a metareligious practice. Though many consider these utterances to be meaningless, others believe them to be a holy language.

God The Great Geometrician of the Universe. See **Minimalism**, **symmetry**.

Gogh, Vincent van Important painter and writer of high religious sensibility. Alcoholic self-harmer. See **ears**.

golden section (golden mean) A proportion (8:13) regarded as having harmonic aesthetic virtue, and which can be found in most works of art. Sometimes said to be 'irrational'.

gonads The development of gonads is a part of the development of the urinary and reproductive organs. The gonad is the organ that makes gametes. The gonads in males are the testicles, and the gonads in females are the ovaries. The product, gametes, are haploid germ cells. For example, spermatozoon and egg cells are gametes.

gothic See **green**.

gothic international Stylistic offshoot of **gothic**.

graphicart Much of contemporary fine art comprises expository diagrams and is therefore, according to traditional criteria, graphic art.

great chains of being Classificatory systems that map experience and are common to all worldviews and scientific theories. In the artworld, classifications tend to relate to a hierarchy that includes the invitation, the private view, the post-private-view dinner, and the post-private-view-after-dinner-drinks party. To arrive at a post-private-view-after-dinner-drinks party without having been invited to the post-private-view dinner (usually not having realised that such a dinner was taking place) is to be publicly exposed as being lower in the Great Chain of Being than if one had only gone to the private view.

green There are more discernible variations of the colour green than any other colour.

grotesque A term that is not, in its technical sense, related to normal usage. Abnormal usage is to be preferred. See **gonads**.

guild An association for the regulation and training of artists. After a period of apprenticeship and general practice, an artist might apply to become a master. See **Groucho Club**, **Colony Room**, **Golden Heart**, **Sekforde Arms**, **drunken shag**, **gonads**.

words **NEAL BROWN**

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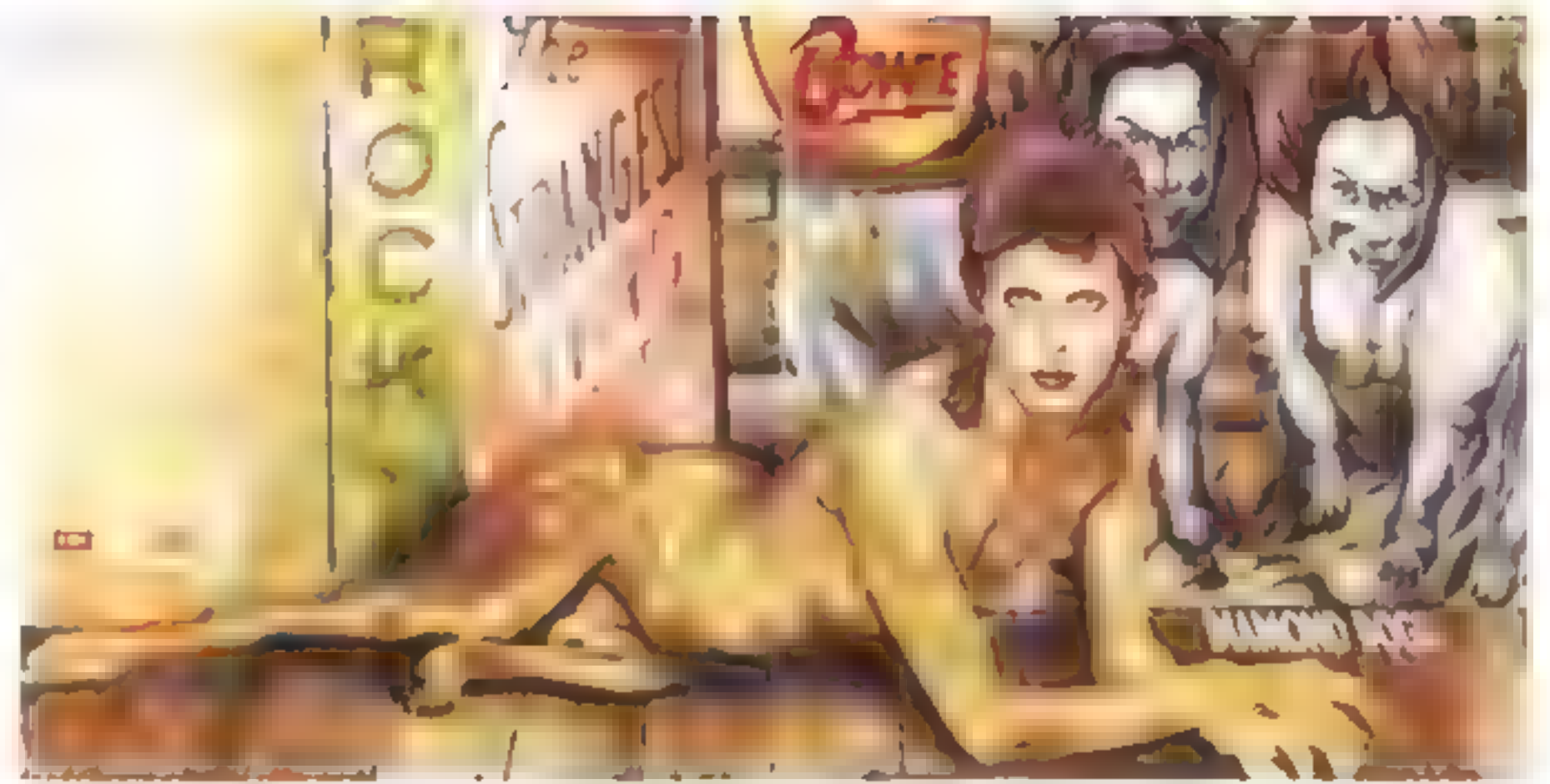
THE MUTT'S NUTS

Guy Peellaert: the man who put the cock in rock

ON THE EVE OF THE ALBUM'S RELEASE by RCA, the cover for David Bowie's *Diamond Dogs* (1974) was presenting problems. It featured Bowie hybridised with a dog, and the record company was convinced that the graphic rendering of the canine's genitals would cause offence in the conservative radio and retail climate of the time. Consequently, and at the 11th hour, executives ordered that the detail be airbrushed out. Copies of the original version – apparently never released, but 'leaked' onto the market without a disc inside – are now extremely rare, with collectors willing to pay \$6,000–\$10,000 for the few examples that exist.

We know that censorship creates desirability, and the prices these covers fetch are proof that the occluded object generates curiosity and wonder. The *Diamond Dogs* case shares similarities with the recent 'banned' Kanye West cover by George Condo (see last month's column), yet differs in one important respect. Whereas the West cover was merely censored, the Bowie cover was manipulated – visually doctored, pictorially castrated.

'The only problem with the project was that they removed the prick', commented Belgian artist Guy Peellaert, who was responsible for the cover painting (but not the later adjustment). 'I thought it was very sad.' However, the controversy did stir up further interest in Peellaert, who had already achieved a degree of fame for the collaborative art book *Rock Dreams* (produced, with text by Nik Cohn, in 1974). This collection of unearthly and surreal images of rock musicians in fictional, often bizarre situations (see the Rolling Stones in Nazi uniforms



she sits knitting incongruously outside what looks like a corner shop, watching a white Rolls-Royce creep grimly up a darkly terraced, symbolically deserted street – like a de Chirico painting set in Liverpool.

The painting style of the portraits is uniformly photographic if not cod-photorealistic, the heavy use of black set off with a dash of psychedelic colour adding a kind of kitsch horror to the palette. They use a halting, collage-based compositional style in which the characters seem to have no relation to one another, even while in the throes of rock excess. Yet today, a few of the paintings somehow manage to maintain a vivid, contemporary feel: Janis Joplin dead in an empty room is one example, looking like a collaboration between Margherita Manzelli and George Shaw. Another such work sees Jethro

words **NIGEL COOKE**

being entertained by naked prepubescent girls) confirmed Peellaert's status as an artist to the stars: the Stones went on to commission an album cover off the back of the Nazi tableau (with Mick politely enquiring what he was driving at with the imagery), Jack Nicholson bought almost all of the paintings and Bowie roped him in for the cover of *Diamond Dogs* – the concept album that worked through the end of his glam-rock phase.

The music on the album is laced with apocalyptic imagery and references to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), making Peellaert's sensibility a good fit, with the cover following the template of the *Rock Dreams* collection in many stylistic ways. All Peellaert's paintings of the musicians have an ominous, doom-laden atmosphere; they may be rock 'dreams', but hardly anyone ever smiles in the book – even the portrait of chirpy Scouse songbird Cilla Black has an air of menace, as

Tull's Ian Anderson as a clownlike paedophile on a park bench, leering at a little girl (a scene pulled from the lyrics of the 1971 Jethro Tull song *Aqualung*). If spotted in a show in London, New York or Berlin this year, these two paintings would seem right at home – nearly 40 years after they were made.

At odds with his aristocratic ancestry, Peellaert (who died in 2008) was attracted to countercultural subversion all his life. It's a thread that runs through his largely pop-centric oeuvre, encompassing graphic novels, film posters (*Taxi Driver*, 1976) and nightclub design as well as painting and drawing. The editing out of the dog's genitals was ultimately the disappointing but predictable act of a mainstream that rarely failed to let him down. Yet maybe the elite status of the handful of original *Diamond Dogs* covers would be Peellaert's cup of tea after all; in his cryptic foreword to *Rock Dreams*, Michael Herr could almost be talking about the Bowie censorship: 'Culture dream, where your wonderful taste won't do you any good, love dreams where you don't know who's on the display and who's the voyeur, or even if you really saw it or dreamed it'.

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CONSUMED

The pick of things you didn't know you really needed. Words OLIVER BASCIANO



03
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01 Design practice Industrial Facility, run by Sam Hecht and Kim Colin, is having a busy 2011, including the current exhibition *Turn, Twist and Branch Off* at the Aram store in London, showcasing the hewn-wood Branca chair range, a series that has been shortlisted in the furniture category in the Design Awards at the Design Museum. Besides this, the designers have undertaken a commission to produce a shirt for Margaret Howell (pictured). The apparel is created specifically for cyclists, with various pockets, discreet and unexpected, in the garment's back panelling and sleeves.

www.margarethowell.co.uk

02 *Routes 1* is the first in an annual series from Adam Murray and Robert Parkinson of the Preston Is My Paris publishing platform, each instalment investigating cities small and large by way of excursions through them. Here Murray maps the directions for a number of regular journeys he makes in Preston, the duo's Lancashire hometown his walks to work and to the local park, a ride on the number 31 bus and then follows the same instructions, taking pictures along the way, from the door of a Paris hotel. Two journeys through two very different towns are thus juxtaposed.

www.pppbooks.blogspot.com

03 Ben Rivers has produced two prints for London's Matt's Gallery to coincide with the gallery's screening of four new 16mm films by the British artist. The prints, in editions of ten, depict desolate landscapes in Lanzarote, one of the locations featured in the exhibited works. Both prints and film evoke a melancholic emptiness, suggestive of a dystopic future for the island in which the beach resort, one of the driest places on the planet, is left to architectural and geographic ruin.

www.mattsgallery.org

04 Zvezdochka ('Little Star') was one of many stray dogs rounded up on the streets of Moscow, trained, clad in customised spacesuits and launched briefly into orbit around earth. Her flight was the last test made by the Soviet Space Agency prior to 12 April 1961, the date Yuri Gagarin became the first human to fly into outer space. Zvezdochka, like the majority of her 57 canine cosmonaut peers, happily made it back to earth intact, as did the spherical Vostok 3KA-2 test capsule that carried her. The spaceship will be auctioned at Sotheby's New York on the 50th anniversary of Gagarin's flight.

www.sothebys.com

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- Where's Duchamp?
- In the library.



05

OK, so this should probably have gone in the magazine in time for Valentine's Day, but *Consumed* will take comfort in the fact that this print of a gem-encrusted heart, *Diamond Heart*, by Ergin Cavusoglu - which relates to *Crystal & Flame* (2010), the film installation the London-based artist presented last year at Hoxton nonprofit space Peer - is less about sentimentalism than about investigating the tension between the hard industry of rocks, economic fluctuations and implied emotional symbolism.

www.peeruk.org

06

A recent body of text works by Bethan Huws, exhibited at London's Whitechapel Gallery this winter, came from her research into Marcel Duchamp. Transposing Duchamp's writing straight onto the gallery wall, the artist asked the viewer to reconsider both the French conceptualist's work and the lineage Huws's own installation and sculpture practice taps into. The hours she has spent researching Duchamp, together with the Frenchman's own original conceptualising, are sent up by the Welsh artist in her latest work for Ingleby Gallery's exterior billboard, a print of which is also available, in an edition of 50.

www.inglebygallery.com

07

Saul Bass spoke of designing film title graphics as a means of conditioning the audience to the mindset of what was to come. During the late 1950s the designer worked for Hitchcock, developing the menacing eye dilation sequence for *Vertigo* (1958), for example. An exhibition of his work is being held at London's Kemistry Gallery, with three screenprints for sale, each in an edition of 10, produced for the occasion by printmaker Jim Northover using some of Bass's most famous images - including the arm motif that appeared on the poster for Otto Preminger's *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955).

www.kemistrygallery.co.uk

08

In 1964 the Mermaid Theatre, London, hosted an exhibition of lithographs made by the Royal College of Art's printmaking department in celebration of Shakespeare's 400th birthday. The Bard is four hundred forty-seven this month, and that show's editions (by the likes of Norman Ackroyd, Sandra Blow and Joe Tilson) are getting a second airing at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford. Tilson's *Shakespeare's XV Sonnet* (pictured) has been reprinted and is for sale, as is a new portfolio, produced in response to the playwright's work, by young contenders from the RCA and invited contemporaries such as Adam Dant and Chantal Joffe.

www.rca.ac.uk

DIGESTED

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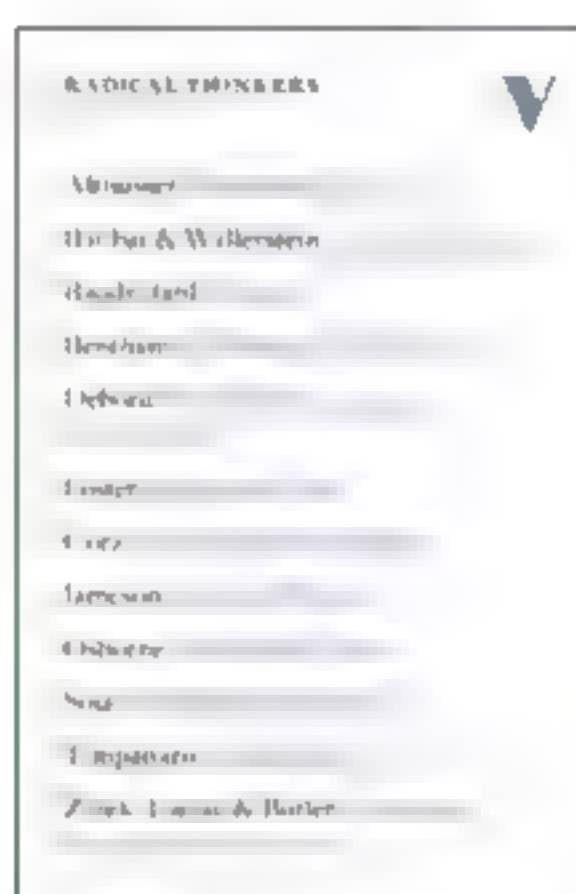


SELECTED POEMS: THE UNCORRECTED BILLY CHYLDISH

By Billy Childish

'Form equals meaning!' was the Tourettic catchphrase one of my English masters used to shriek at the beginning of class each week. I presume that artist, poet and songwriter Billy Childish has a similar mantra running through his head. Not just because this volume comes packaged in the retro livery of Penguin's 'classics' poetry collections (although the particular hue of green he has chosen was most famously used for crime), but also because it contains verse composed in the unedited, idiosyncratic spelling born of its author's dyslexic mind. If the first means that Childish thinks his poetry's great, the second suggests that it is unadulterated and true to himself. And what do I think? Childish is not bad, but even dyslexia – lines like 'a small crowed had gavad to whatch' – can eventually come across as a rather clunky conceit. And yet I can't help but be seduced by a tongue that appears familiar and foreign at the same time. I'm not saying Childish is this age's William Blake, but just because Penguin has been slow to get the message doesn't mean that this collection is not worth seeking out. *Mark Rappolt*

L-13, £7.99 (softcover)



RADICAL THINKERS: SET 5

Verso's *Radical Thinkers* series, now in its fifth set, are groups of slender, elegant volumes, their covers featuring minimal line drawings, that not only present important critical works but are also specifically selected to meet the needs of the moment. This new set has largely been chosen for a generation attempting to resist the culture of cuts, and accordingly, several of them are works which consider, at a technical level, alternative ways in which art and society might be organised. So we have Jameson on the methods of Brecht, Debord's revisiting of *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) and Jeremy Bentham's writings on the Panopticon, which had such great influence on Michel Foucault. As Baudrillard writes in *Passwords* (2003), also printed in this series, words 'have a life of their own and, hence, are mortal'. And so, with this edition, his vehicles of meaning will happily transport their living message to living readers.

Laura McLean Ferris

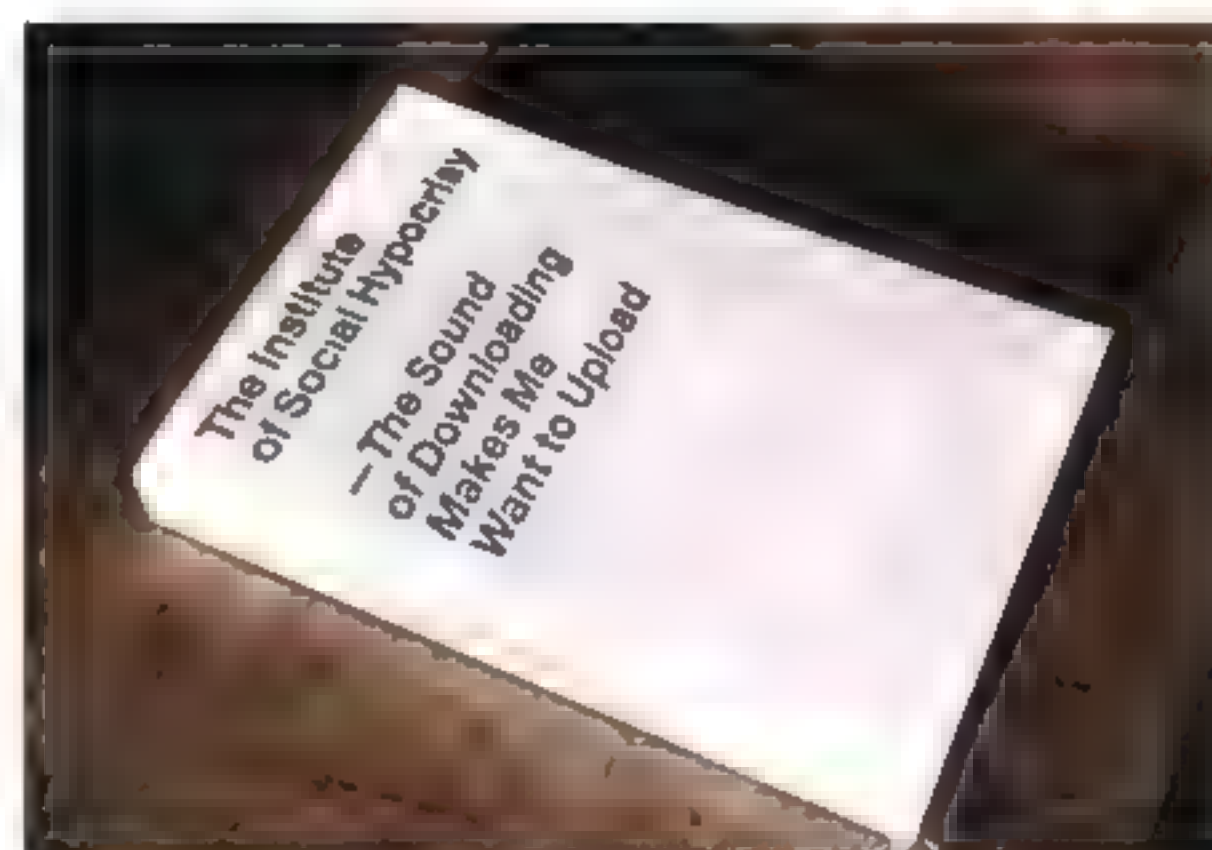
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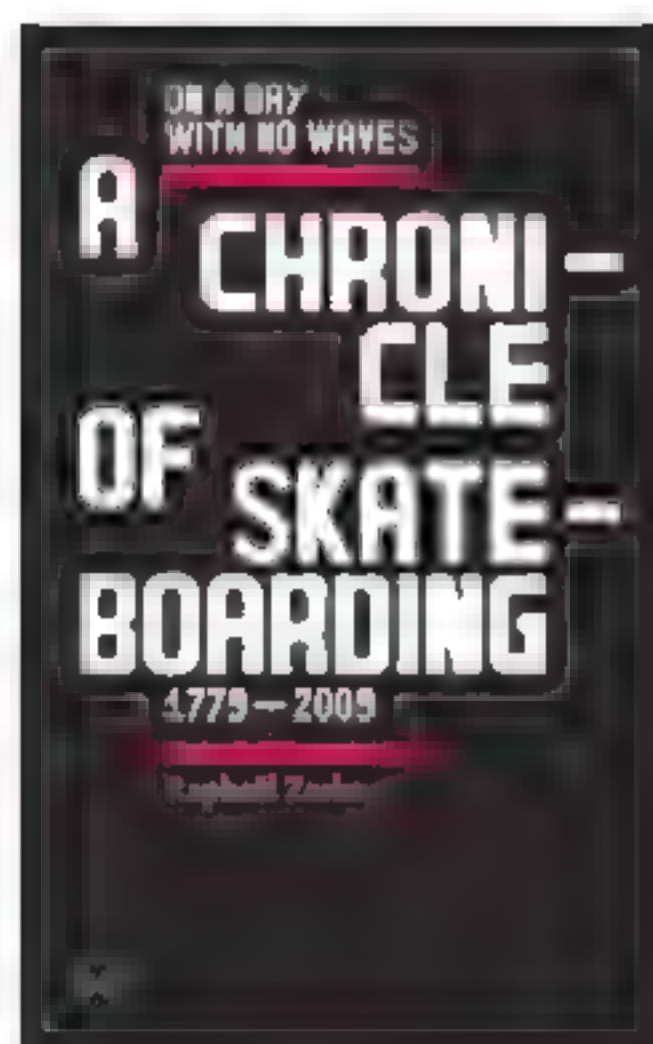
The Institute of Social Hypocrisy: The Sound of Downloading Makes Me Want to Upload

Edited by Victor Boulet

When it comes to the Internet, many of us are downloaders, readers, watchers, mouse-clickers but who among us are the true uploaders? Should we rely so much on their efforts, informed as they are by the particular interests of the uploading type? Victor Boulet, an artist who among other things runs the Institute of Social Hypocrisy in Paris (*ArtReview* recently reviewed a project of his that involved locking up a curator for a week and feeding him only whale meat), initiated this rather wildly assembled book project on the difference between uploading and downloading as two types of social activity, which features contributions from Oliver Laric, Nina Pearlman, Bill Drummond, Hans Ulrich Obrist (of course) and Keren Cytter, among others. Email correspondence from the contributors is included, as well as imagery (as seems to be the fashion with artists' books about the Internet, the porn industry as metaphor is given rather a lot of space here: there's a whole section of images under the category of anal gape, contributed by Edie McKay), which, in a replication of the way that everything sits together on the Internet, no matter how inappropriately, exists alongside a more amusing contribution from Cytter about her addictions to uploading material – manically creating groups, events and a MySpace page for a character called 'John the funny hamster', complete with pictures and videos of hamsters running on keyboards. Well, that's freedom for you. We conceive of all this, points out Pearlman, as a kind of public space, though in reality the online public are often just traffic on private property. *LMF*

Lauren Monchar, £14 (softcover)





On a Day with No Waves: A Chronicle of Skateboarding, 1779-2009 By Raphaël Zarka

The mainstay of French artist Raphaël Zarka's heavily researched text is a straight history chronicling the development of skateboarding from the Western discovery of the indigenous Hawaiian practice of surfing, the sport's wave-bound precursor, to skateparks opened and championships held as recently as 2009. While this may sound like a tedious affair to those without a prior interest in the activity, Zarka imbues his prose with enough rhythm and asides to reward the general-reader's perseverance. Zarka also eschews the making of explicit connections between skateboarding and art, leaving that to the reader of his appended essay, an appraisal of Roger Caillois's *Man, Play and Games* (1958). Writing prior to the proliferation of skateboarding in France, Caillois never addresses the sport directly, giving Zarka the opportunity to present his persuasive hypothesis that skateboarding breaks down the separation between play and everyday (one can skate anywhere and anytime not the case with, say, surfing or playing tennis), and that it operates at a conjunction of orders within play that Caillois had posited as mutually exclusive. For Zarka at least, the skater can experience both control and vertigo simultaneously. *Oliver Basciano*

Editions B42, €16 (softcover)

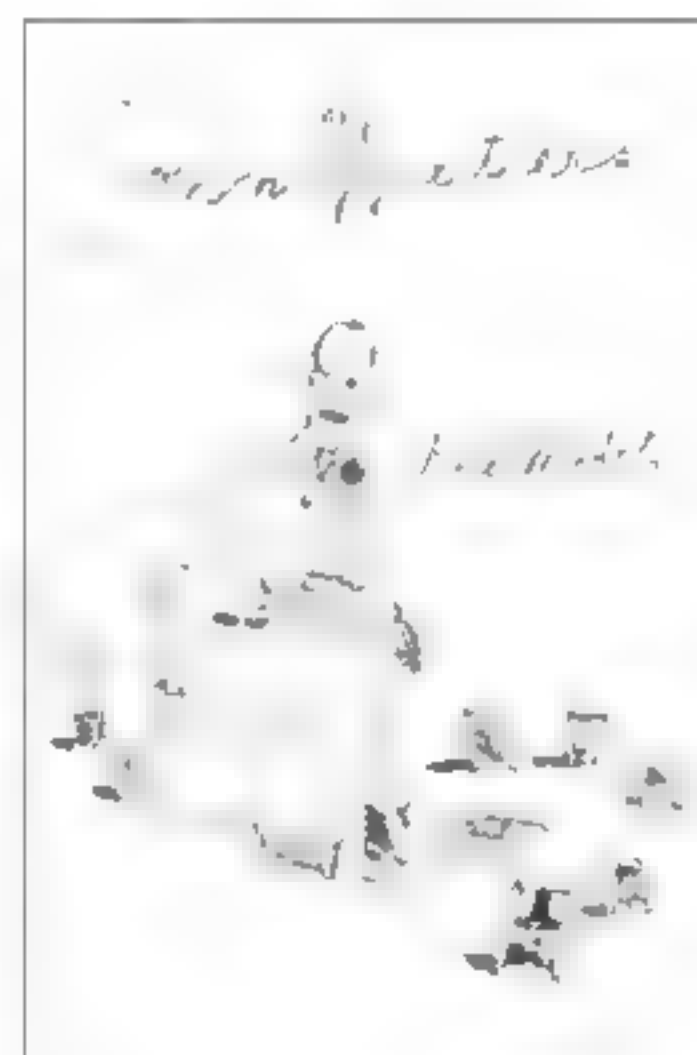
NEW ARCHITECTURE IN THE EMERGING WORLD

Projects by Andrew Bromberg, Aedas
Edited by Oscar Riera Ojeda

This is the story of Adam Bromberg, an architect from the American West who, eight years ago, joined Aedas, a big (38 offices; 2,500 staff) architecture firm based in the Far East. Bromberg exemplifies a new post-starchitect paradigm in which large and largely anonymous corporate architecture firms, which are designing the majority of the world's commercial, retail and leisure spaces in urban centres across Asia, incorporate a named boutique studio to produce some moderately wild designs à la Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas and Zaha Hadid. And given the fact that corporate architects are so often accused of lacking flair, while starchitects are often said to lack the ability to produce a building that meets its eventual users' needs (and budgets), might this not be a satisfying compromise?

For the critic Aaron Betsky, Aedas-Bromberg produces architecture that is the bastard spawn of a union between the standardised and the exceptional. You can do nothing but read on in fascinated horror as this train of thought shunts Betsky down this incredible line: 'Some of Bromberg's most impressive and innovative designs are, in fact, exceptional'. Which is where, naturally, this book hits the buffers; for why, if the majority of Bromberg's designs are not exceptional, would anyone want to read through 400 pages of them? As architecture publications go, this one simply doesn't. *MR*

Thames & Hudson, £24.95 (softcover)



Role Models By John Waters

Each essay in *Role Models*, profiling John Waters's pantheon of heroes, is clearly titled under its subject's name; that, though, doesn't stop the filmmaker from indulging in many a diversion featuring lowlife bars and unseemly companions. Rubbing shoulders with Comme des Garçons's Rei Kawakubo, crooner Johnny Mathis and artist Cy Twombly, then, are the likes of Esther, the fierce licensee of a Baltimore dive bar, whose favourite epithet was 'cocksucker'; or 'the Moose', a 'lazy' stripper who one night, when it came her turn to dance and she was still seated on the side-of-stage toilet, 'just kicked the door open... and shook her tits at the audience'. This tangential approach makes for loose, informal prose, akin to the standup monologues in which Waters regales audiences with tales of difficult, brazen characters who refuse to bow to authority or societal norms. In *Role Models*, too, Waters's characters share an awareness of their power to cause edifying ruptures in the status quo, whether it's gay-porn auteur Bobby Garcia's 'naturalising' of the trade's aesthetic through his shoots with serving marines in the 1980s or the literary antics of curmudgeonly early-twentieth-century novelist Ivy Compton-Burnett (dying words: 'Leave me alone'), who, like contemporary e.e. cummings, had little truck with punctuation. *OB*

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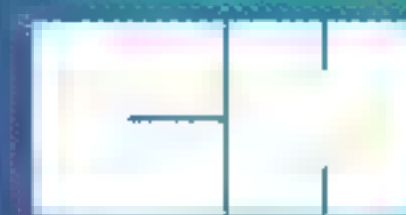
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Esther Nienhuis, Saudade (detail), 2011, oil on linen, 160 x 130cm

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● GREAT CRITICS AND THEIR IDEAS

In this ongoing series, the writers who have shaped the way we think about art talk frankly about what's on their minds

NO 3: IMMANUEL KANT ON NEGATIVE SPACE



Although he was only five feet tall and in his entire life never travelled more than ten miles beyond his birthplace, the Prussian city of Königsberg, the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) had an immense influence on the history of aesthetics.

interview by **MATTHEW COLLINGS**

Anthony Caro, *Early One Morning*, 1962, painted steel and aluminium, 290 x 620 x 336 cm, collection Tate, London. Photo: John Riddy/Tate, London, 2010. © the artist and Barford Sculptures Ltd, London.
Modern British Sculpture is on view at Royal Academy of Arts, London, to 7 April

ARTREVIEW

What's on your mind?

KANT

Time and space. Time isn't something we know from experience, but rather it is an idea hardwired in us by which we explain the experience of what we usually call 'time'. And the same goes for space. I like the relationship of negative space to positive shapes in Anthony Caro's *Early One Morning* in *Modern British Sculpture* at the Royal Academy. And I like Christian Marclay's film installation *The Clock*, in the British Art Show 7, currently at the Hayward Gallery, which is about time and fantasy, based on everyone's experience of the movies.

AR You really get around and see everything! Have you seen the George Condo show at the New Museum?

KANT Ha, ha – yes. As far as *esprit* is concerned, there's a lot going on with Condo. Although in the end I don't know what it amounts to. He starts out offering something amusing that an art audience is already familiar with – thin paint, maybe, or thick, or kitsch cartooning, or cubist spatial sophistication – but then the painting always ends up doing what those categories of art experience would be likely to do.

AR Should we read your books in order to get a good idea about what art is?

KANT You'd just be going backwards. I think it's fine to appreciate art through whatever's available in your own time. It's OK to use contemporary ideas and terms, together with your own experience. Going back to the earliest sources would be a rather rarefied approach. I was reading your book *Blimey!* the other day and I noticed it contained a helpful summation of 200 years of aesthetics in a one-line section headed 'Formalism'. The line said, 'After all, was it really so bad?'

AR Thank you.

KANT Think nothing of it, Matthew.

AR Are you a formalist? Is that why you like Caro?

KANT When I look at *Early One Morning*, I enjoy the experience, because seeing is heightened. Consciousness is exalted. No other meaning distracts me. Formalism just means you look for meaning in form. Having that approach means you are likely to draw different conclusions about works of art than someone who doesn't have it.

AR Did you start it?

KANT Well, I looked at the nature of subjectivity more than art as such. But that eventually meant looking at judgement and taste, and what we think we mean when we say something is 'beautiful'. Judgement is important because no thought is possible without it. And those

kinds of ideas were very striking later for people who wanted to understand what art could mean when it was in a free state, which, under Modernism, it was thought to be more and more. Clement Greenberg is the name usually associated with formalism. He had his own proposals about Modernism, which he developed in his work as a journalist, and he never pretended they were on a level with academic philosophy. But in seeking to deepen his ideas, during the early 1940s, he discovered my *Critique of Judgement*. His great art-historical survey essays were written under the influence of Trotskyite socialism. But after encountering *The Critique of Judgement*, which was originally published in 1790, and then seeking out glosses upon it by later figures, his position gradually changed. What he thought I was saying about the subjectivity of taste and the proper concerns of judgement became his central theme. It was as if he saw in my analysis of aesthetic experience the reflection of his own preoccupations, but with a different emphasis to that which he had previously given them. In the meantime, in academia, the idea that my writings represent a turning point in the way art is understood had settled in. When I was alive there was agreement in art circles that pictures fall into certain types. But from my researches into how we perceive reality, and the modes that come into it, intuitive and objective, I concluded that the categorisation of paintings into picture types was wrong. *The Oath of the Horatii*, by David, is an example of history painting, which is the highest picture type. But the kinds of contents this work has besides beauty of form – historical, intellectual, moral and so on – great as they are, might be distractions from beauty, and not, as they would normally be considered, reasons to find *The Oath of the Horatii* beautiful. A humble picture of flowers or whatnot by Chardin, which conforms to the lowest picture type, the still life, and has relatively little intellectual content, might be more beautiful. In this case judgement about beauty doesn't depend on some other praiseworthy matter but is entirely independent. And this is the drift of the development of modern art: away from the importance of types and genres, and towards something completely other than that, which the artwork seems to be offering. Since I often talk about the individual soul, the notion of a truly fulfilled

When I look at 'Early One Morning', seeing is heightened. Consciousness is exalted. No other meaning distracts me. Formalism just means you look for meaning in form.

● GREAT CRITICS AND THEIR IDEAS

humanity, and the most terrible idea conceivable being that one's actions are controlled by the will of another, and since all this amounts to an outline of Enlightenment ideals, it has become routine to mention my researches in relation to the freedom of art. Whether you're talking about abstract shapes being meaningful or about the freedom of mind that makes Duchamp's readymades possible

AR What about *The Clock* again—is it the form that's good?

KANT It's more a work of narrative than anything visual as such. The narrative is apparently discontinuous, because the work is basically a collage. But subtle continuities are constantly sought in the edit, so there is an irrational but compelling flow that a dream typically has. Dreams, after all, are historically close to movies. *The Clock's* theme is reiterated in several ways and in countless variations on the ways, and actually part of the delight is its defeat of time; you don't feel fidgety and wish to leave. There's very little else in the British Art Show that rewards hanging around. Sarah Lucas's sculptures are the exception besides *The Clock*, because, being primarily visual and formal, they get better every time you see them.

AR What about her jokes on formalism?

KANT They are funny. But there is something else going on. There are variations on a theme of organic shapes defined in relation to rectangular ones. Clarity is very important in her play of elements. There are differences of surface, even differences of height, which are significant. Every adjustment contributes to a feeling of hard-won unity. Comedy formalism is a guise for actual formality, whereas the other ideas that the work has, feminism, populism and so on, remain just comical. I'm not saying comedy is inessential to what she does, but it's not the ultimate aim or effect.

AR What is?

KANT Pleasure. And metapleasure: pleasure drawing attention to itself being pleasurable.

AR Is formal the same as beautiful?

KANT The beautiful is universal, even though in practice it isn't. But in art where there's a formal proposal, the ideal is that this kind of beauty, in theory at least, is available to all. Lucas's *Nuds* are funny about Modernism's blindness to context. Or maybe they are astute about present-day artworld people's obsessive overconcern with context.

AR Not everyone serious necessarily applauds *The Clock*. They think it's like clapping an autistic person who made a time-consuming but pointless thing.

KANT Consuming time is the point. You might expect its structure to be all too graspable. Sections of thousands of movies from different periods and from around the world are spliced together to create a 24-hour clock. But the film transcends its own gag. The pleasure is in the way disconnected fragments are joined so that their discrete nature remains evident while an insistent yet hard-to-define internal unity challenges it. Also, there is the sheer interest in how different movies stage ideas, and the constant reminder of the iconic power of the cinema. Not to mention lesser levels, which contribute to the overall unity. Fictional time is keyed in to real time, the exact way in which a clock is suddenly going to feature is kept unpredictable from section to section, and there is a similar element of surprise to the length of each section, which varies from minutes to mere seconds. Perhaps the greatest unifying element, as I say, is the work's confidence in its own narrative. You never feel the edits are jarring or thoughtless, and the thought is always a bit different from one cut to another.

AR I think you will have alienated readers with your put-down of George Condo. Isn't he giving us pleasure with a balance of finesse and anarchy, and thus returning us to the greats of painting?

KANT Is that really what the greats do? As a strategy, stepping aside from intensity can be effective in pointing out how officially sanctioned intensity ossifies. But you want to know what else is involved besides avoidance. Art with substance is better than art without it. Especially when the object of reassessment continues to seem intense. The whole stream of ironically regressive figurative and semifigurative art that Condo has inspired, John Currin et al, has this problem. And the inspirees of the inspired, as you see them in the British Art Show, for example, have the added problem of seeming to believe that irony is not irony but sincerity. So there is a strong feeling from this exhibition that painting, rather than having the purpose of transcending the rational, of exalting the ineffable and expressing the emotion that we have within us but didn't know we had until it was shown to us by art, has become merely the haven of the stupid. A new approach that makes painting seem serious and relevant again is still awaited. In any case, Condo's paintings, as sympathetic as one might be to his lively visual intelligence, don't have the stamina of *The Clock*. This work is literally about stamina, and I've just pointed to some of the ways in which the artist makes it into a theme. But perhaps it says something about the buzzing generality of officially sanctioned art in the 2010s that he feels he has to make it into a theme at all. ●

Next month: Gertrude Stein gets to grips with Orozco and the overweening ambition of Tate Modern's wall labels

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Kira Kim



White Figures on a Dark Background
Mixed Media, 2010, 100x100cm



Songsik Min



Orange Shape on a Blue Background
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White Chair on a Dark Background
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As a London exhibition bestows the label
'era defining' on New York performance
artist **Laurie Anderson**,
ArtReview wires itself in for a morning of
ventriloquism, conspiracy theories and
the presidential ambitions of a blowhard
named Bergamot

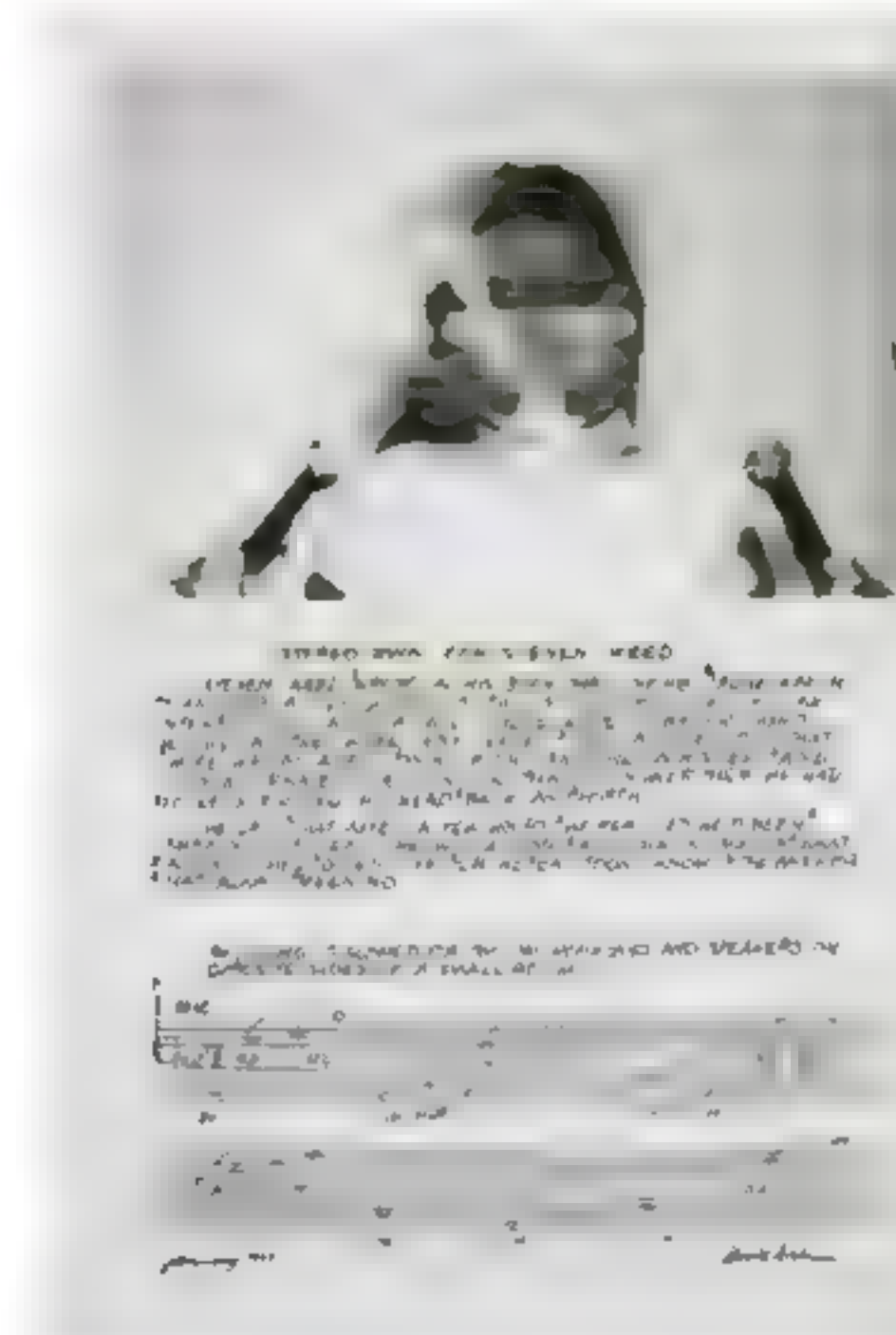
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WORDS: JONATHAN T.D. NEIL
PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK HAYMES



BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, Fenway Bergamot may or may not have announced that he is running for president of the United States. That is inconsequential. Not that Bergamot may or may not run for president of the United States. Well, actually, yes, that is inconsequential too, because it is only repeating what was inconsequential about the statement before, which is that Bergamot may run for president or he may not, and that is pretty much the same as saying that *you* may or may not run for president, or that *I* may or may not run for president. Really, this is simply a way of saying that Fenway Bergamot exists, and saying that he may or may not run for president is also simply a way of proposing two potential worlds, one where Bergamot runs for president, and one where he does not. The interesting thing is that those two worlds simply describe one world, this world, the current world, in its entirety, which is the world in which Fenway Bergamot may or may not run for president of the United States – on the Republican ticket, by the way

Fenway Bergamot is Laurie Anderson. *This* is consequential, though also not wholly accurate. Fenway Bergamot is the name recently given by Lou Reed (Anderson's partner of nearly 20 years, and husband for the past three) to the voice that Anderson has used throughout her career at moments when she needed to give voice to one other than her own. Some have called Bergamot Anderson's alter ego, a character that she invented for her performances; but it is important to remember that Bergamot is first and foremost a voice, one that embodies a distinct kind of American authority, our big Other as philosophical talking head, a ventriloquist for the invisible hand of the market, a voice of power plugged into an AC circuit (Anderson has a thing for Nikola Tesla) – or as Anderson would probably say, a blowhard.

So to say that Bergamot is Anderson's alter ego is to go too far, because with Anderson's work, it's not ego, it's voice. Fenway Bergamot and Laurie Anderson share the same voice, as they do, for example, on *Another Day in America*, a track from Anderson's celebrated studio album *Homeland* (2010; that's Fenway's smug mug on the cover). Yet even this is not accurate, because their two voices could not be more distinct, even in their identity.



*Anderson switches
channels, she
brings in a new
track, when her
own 'voice'
just won't do*

Anderson's 'tape-bow violin' can clarify this for us: in 1976, with some technical help from audio engineer and sound designer Bob Bielecki, Anderson retrofitted an amplified violin with a tape head for the bridge and a violin bow with magnetic tape in place of its horsehair. Drawing the bow in one direction would find the violin 'speaking' a prerecorded 'yes', and drawing it the other way would find the violin 'speaking' a prerecorded 'say'. 'Yes' one way; 'say' the other. Same violin. Same bow. Same tape. Different words. 'Yes'. 'Say'. Bergamot. Anderson.

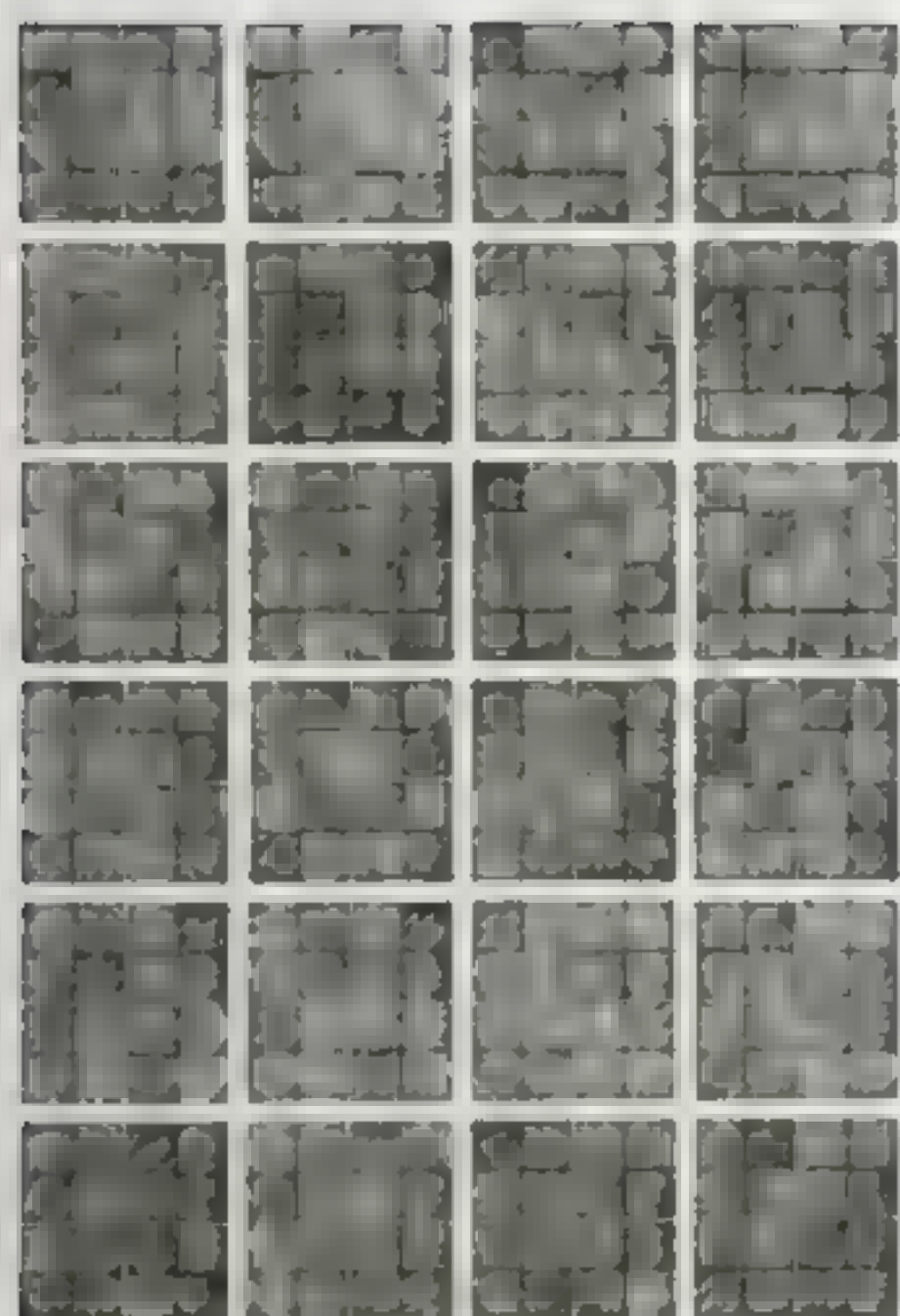
As we can see, one does not exactly play the tape-bow violin. One 'speaks' it, or rather, it speaks itself. It 'say[s]' 'yes' on its own. The performer, whoever is 'manning' the bow, simply modulates what the instrument already has to say. And if there were a Bergamot to Anderson's tape-bow violin, it would have to be the 'pillow speaker' (1978–9). Here the conventional sound that a violin makes returns as a solo performance recorded on tape. That tape is then played in a deck, which is attached to a pillow speaker (a pocket watch-sized, soft-sided speaker), which the performer places in her mouth so that, according to Anderson's drawing for the piece, her lips can then 'phrase & modulate [the] sound'. If in the tape-bow violin a recorded voice was substituted for the instrument's 'natural' sound, then in the pillow speaker a recorded sound is substituted for the performer's 'natural' voice. And just as violinists refer to the violin as their instrument, singers and actors often refer to their voices as their instruments; but where violinists play their violins, singers and actors do not play their voices. They just sing or speak. But with the pillow speaker, as with the tape-bow violin, the performer does neither. The pillow speaker speaks for the performer, or perhaps it plays her. Either way, all she can do is 'phrase & modulate'.

There is something vaguely conspiratorial, even paranoid, in these inhabitations and inversions and doublings of one kind of medium (a person, a violin) by another (a tape, a speaker). As with all good conspiracies, one can find traces of them everywhere: Anderson's background is Midwestern wholesome, but as she reminds me, "half the Weathermen [members of a radical left-wing resistance movement active in the late 1960s and early 70s] came from the town where I grew up" (this is Glen Ellyn, Illinois, which, for conspiracy's sake, is about an hour from where I grew up), and the place formed her left-leaning politics well before she got to drawing political cartoons and occupying buildings in New York, at Barnard and Columbia University in the late 1960s. Or think of how Anderson reworked Carl Andre's great adage, 'A



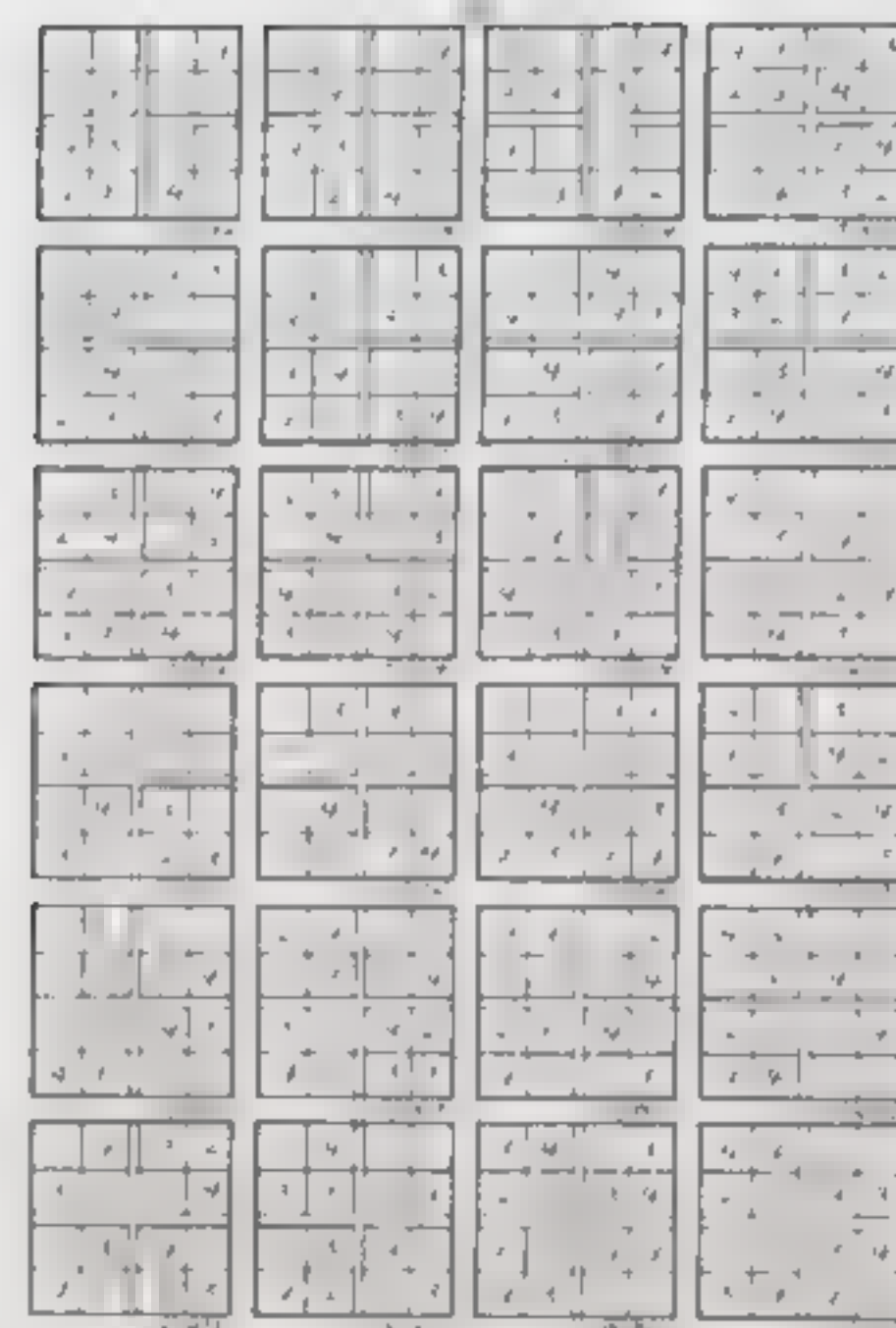
thing is a hole in a thing it is not', into the title and chorus for her rather underappreciated pop song *It's Not the Bullet That Kills You, It's the Hole (for Chris Burden)* (1977), which could first be heard on a jukebox installed at New York's Holly Solomon Gallery. Or think of that other bit of wildly bizarre and spectacularised conspiracy: the kidnapping of Patty Hearst. Anderson's *Stereo Song for Steven Weed* (1977) tells how Weed, Hearst's young fiancé and author of the opportunistic memoir *My Search for Patty Hearst* (1976), was questioned by the FBI about the heiress's 1974 kidnapping and conversion to Symbionese Liberation Army poster-girl. With an agent on each side taking turns asking him questions, Weed, according to Anderson's lyric, "had to keep turning his head back and forth" to answer, and afterwards he realised that "no matter what answer he'd given – 'yes' or 'no' or 'I don't know' – the answer had always been no".

In this case, Weed's language was not his own – elsewhere Anderson sings "Language is a virus from outer space"; the line is from William S. Burroughs (Anderson has a thing for Burroughs) – even when it seemed it was. To dramatise the scene, Anderson scored her song for 'two microphones and speakers on opposite sides of a small room' and then annotated the lyrics with ones and twos to tell the performer into which mic to speak. Standing between the two mics, the performer may be 'singing' the song, but she would also always be shaking her head 'no'. A photograph



QUARTET FOR SOL LEWITT

I composed *Quartet for Sol*
Lewitt" 1977 by assigning
note values to numbers
according to their placement
in his drawing. The piece
was scored for four voices.



accompanying the score captures the superposition of Anderson's head on this reciprocal swivel, looking left and looking right, which could be construed as both 'looking out' (for whatever may be coming) and, as captured in the audio recording of *Steven Weed* from the live performance of Anderson's epic *United States* (1984), 'looking like no'.

Sometime in the middle of our interview, Anderson tells me that she loves a good conspiracy. Well, actually, no, she does not tell me this, because before she gets to "–spiracy", and as if channeling *Steven Weed*, her head begins a quick swivel, scanning the corners of the room, and her voice takes on a completely different tone – "Yes? Oh. What's going on here? Something's wrong here?" – for 'effect', as they say. Anderson switches channels, she brings in a new track, when her own 'voice' just won't do, and I realise that she has been doing this – switching channels, changing tracks – the entire time we talk. On the artworld: "It tends to feel like a rat race. Artists become experts who are just niche-ing their thing and then putting up their *big billboards saying 'Look at me'*", which comes out a full octave higher and as if Anderson's yelling without raising her voice. On debt: "A lot of young artists have big loans, crushing debt, and going into *that high-paying artworld*" – here Anderson's voice has gone high with traces of barely contained contemptuous laughter – "*where you're definitely going to wipe that debt out right away... there's no chance in hell of doing that*". On Iceland: "*Everyone in the country is in a band*", deep and disbelieving, like Bergamot without an amp. On MoMA: "*juhn-juhn-juhn processsssed*". This, my favourite, is the sound the museum makes as it mechanically ratifies what gets into and what gets left out of the institutional artworld.

It becomes clear that Anderson's conversational style, the way she speaks, is structurally similar to her art. So perhaps Craig Owens, one of Anderson's early champions (and her best theoretical ventriloquist) missed something by wanting Anderson's art to be all about what he called a 'general thematics of reading'. Rather, I think he was on to something when he mentioned Anderson's metaphor for consciousness – "I am in my body the way most people drive in their cars" – though he quickly left it to tackle Anderson's 'allegorical impulse'.

In that driving metaphor there is something compelling about what it is like to be in the world today, where people switch lanes, speed, turn, idle, crash, stop short, rock out, watch out, get out and, yes, sometimes read. It's a metaphor for what Mark Seltzer calls the 'media apriori' of modern society: 'the social and technical systems of body and information transport, commuting and communication – the motion industries and the message industries – that are defining the attributes of that society.' Anderson's medium has always been and remains the 'media apriori'. What's the message?

Vote Bergamot – or don't. :

Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark: *Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, New York 1970s* is on view at the Barbican Art Gallery, London, to 22 May

WORKS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Fully Automated Nikon (Object/Objection/Objectivity) (detail), 1973,
six framed gelatin silver prints and seven framed text panels, dimensions variable

The Pillow Speaker (detail), 1978–9, ink on paper and photograph, 21 x 25 cm

Stereo Song for Steven Weed from Jukebox, 1977,
black-and-white photograph and ink on paper, 45 x 33 cm

The Handphone Table, 1978

Homeland, 2010
Nonesuch Records

Quartet for Sol LeWitt, 1977, photocopies mounted on board, 28 x 60 cm

all works
© the artist. Courtesy the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York



Pham Luan, *Street Vendors* oil on canvas, 135x155cm, 2009

Artists

Le Quy Tong
Pham Luan
Phuong Quoc Tri
Hong Viet Dung
Do Quang Em
Dang Xuan Hoa
Tran Luu Hau
Hoang Duc Dung
Nguyen Van Cuong

Bui Huu Hung
Le Thanh Son
Dao Hai Phong
Do Hoang Tuong
Dinh Y Nhi
Le Thiet Cuong
Lim Khim Katy
Bui Van Hoan

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Le Quy Tong, *One Side of Youth* oil on canvas, 200 x 320 cm, 2009

In recent years, the deployment of art as a catalyst for social change has been problematic at best. But down in South Los Angeles, one artist seems to be making a difference.



Is Edgar Arceneaux stubborn, out of his mind or simply free of the hang-ups that hold back such projects today?

-

WORDS: HOLLY MYERS



IT'S NOT EASY TO GET A HANDLE ON just what it is Edgar Arceneaux does. His work spans nearly every medium and a panoply of visual styles. He's made sculptures out of books encrusted with sugar crystals; sci-fi drawings of car crashes in outer space; a multichannel videowork dissecting the routine of a stand-up comedian; and a sound installation in an empty house involving the emission of subaudible frequencies known to cause feelings of unease and anxiety. He often works in collaboration, which has splintered his practice along unforeseen trajectories, and moves across multiple artworld strata with ease. He is as invested in the aesthetic as in the social – to a degree few contemporary artists manage, or even attempt – dividing his time between a successful studio practice (with upcoming shows in Basel, Paris and Milan), and the operation of a nonprofit organisation, Watts House Project, dedicated to the revitalisation of a beleaguered South Los Angeles neighbourhood.

He is a restless thinker but an authoritative speaker, with that innate fusion of gravity and zeal one finds in any natural leader. Speaking in the dim light of an installation at his recent exhibition *The Algorithm Doesn't Love You*, at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects – the second in a projected trilogy of shows produced in tandem with a book project he's undertaken with art historian Julian Myers – he moves with disorienting swiftness between a seemingly disparate range of topics relating, by way of a broad and winding sort of logic, to the city of Detroit: the 1967 riots, Plato's *Republic*, the birth of techno, the artist Michael Heizer, the nature of civic institutions and the physical properties of sugar. The installation itself is stark and foreboding: several metal shelving units stacked with sugar-encrusted cardboard boxes, set around a white, globe-shaped lantern that sways like a pendulum at the end of a cord. Subsequent rooms include bannerlike paintings depicting what the artist describes as "the gods of Detroit" – monstrous figures with twisted, bulbous limbs representing various institutional forces – and drawings of the burned-out bar in which the riots began, floating through space on a Heizer-like chunk of earth. The project presents a history of sorts – an investigation of "subterranean Detroit" developed in conversation with Myers – but one that rejects the traditional paradigm of cause and effect in favour of something more flexible and associative, a mode that allows the historian to "jump around and see the affinities between different histories and then describe that inbetween-ness."



*“Art’s real power is
in its unruliness.
It is a process that
can be directed
towards anything”*

The attempt to get at “that inbetween-ness” may be as close as one comes, looking at Arceneaux’s ever-shifting output, to a single unifying principle. He gravitates to conditions of connection, association, evolution and process. He’s fascinated by the life of cities, the operations of institutions and scientific processes. Take sugar, a substance he’s worked with for years: “It has the ability to exist in multiple states simultaneously”, he says. Also, when it’s crystallising, its growth is indeterminate. “It will branch out, the branches can break and it will regenerate and just keep going, to the point at which it will fill the entire basin it’s in. Watching this kind of accumulation, looking at the nature of the material – to me, this is my whole philosophy about art and life. There’s a direct connection between the tools that you use and what the tools will allow you to represent. Right? These things are completely linked. So oftentimes when I’m experimenting with processes, I’m trying to figure out: what is it that this thing is expressing beyond what my intention was? What are its attributes? What else is it doing?”

Nowhere is the sugar analogy more apt than in the case of the Watts House Project, a neighbourhood-improvement initiative with the potential to fill as big a basin as Arceneaux and his team can manage to secure. Conceived in 1996 by Rick Lowe, the founder of Houston’s Project Row Houses, in an attempt to replicate the success of that programme in a region of Watts adjacent to the famous Watts Towers, the project was passed to Arceneaux – then little more than an undergraduate – when Lowe found himself overextended. It lay dormant for nearly a decade while Arceneaux established his own career, gradually developing the sort of clout that would incline those with resources to take him seriously. He finally relaunched the programme in 2007. Since then, it has expanded from a beautification project along a particular block to one of LA’s most ambitious public artworks: a complex collaborative network involving residents, artists and arts institutions (both the Hammer Museum and the LA County Museum are significant investors), dedicated to change, ranging from the practical to the visionary: from improving facades, working with the city to moderate an unreasonable parking situation and agitating for a greater police protection from gang activity to creating jobs, attracting investment, building a cultural centre and raising community morale. What distinguishes the project from others of its kind, and what gives it the potential to shift the debate on the relationship between art and activism, is also what distinguishes Arceneaux’s practice generally: an instinct for collaboration, a fascination with process.

“Normally when we think about the arts and its relationship to politics and the social”, he says, “it’s about people wanting the arts to have a utilitarian function. They want to use it as a tool, to say this is in service of that, we’re using art to do so and so. I think that art’s real power is in its unruliness. I see it as a process that can be directed towards anything. When we say the Watts House Project is an ongoing collaborative artwork, what we’re saying is that it is the process itself which is the work – not the houses, not the fences and these kinds of things. We’re not saying that we’re using art to an end, we’re saying that we are actually making it happen in every single step.”

This approach is clearly not without its difficulties. While Arceneaux describes the project in a language that is strikingly more concise than his discussion of his own work – as if hammered out over years of city council meetings, grant applications and



outreach attempts (which, of course, it has been) – he concedes that communication has been an issue. “I can trace back most of our problems to the fact that people don’t really understand what it is that we’re doing,” he says. “What are you? That kind of inbetween-ness I was talking about before, that works well in a place like this.” He gestures to the gallery. “But the rifts, the fumbles, the tumbles, the criticisms have to do with the sort of cynicism that comes with not knowing.”

I first spoke to Arceneaux about the project last summer, sitting on the curb of East 107th Street, a block that had clearly become a second home. He knew everyone who passed by name; they’d stop to chat, he’d ask about their families or their jobs. (He grew up a couple of miles to the west – not far, he points out, from where *Boys in the Hood* (1991) was filmed – before his family moved to the suburb of West Covina.) Speaking now, in his other world – a dim, quiet Culver City gallery – he is equally at ease, if a touch more candid about the obstacles he’s faced in Watts, including what he describes as his first encounter with “real destroyers”. “People”, he says, “who are there to wreck”. He declines to give names, but implies that they hail from across the spectrum of those involved, from the community as well as the institutional factions: agents, in whatever form, of narrow thinking and blind resistance to change. Drawing energy, perhaps, from his studies in Detroit – his tone echoes the politicised language of the Detroit techno label Underground Resistance – he seems to have taken the confrontation as fuel.

“This polarising who-are-you, what-do-you-want, tell-me-now attitude can destroy – has destroyed – a lot of other efforts,”

he says, “that have been, in my opinion, very rigid in their organisational capacity and structure. We’re more like the water principle, we can flex and flow and bend and engage these things, move around them, be responsive to the emerging challenges. I don’t think we could have done any of that if it wasn’t for us being artists and being trained in this sort of multidisciplinary, cross-categorical way of being. Because we’re not the first ones to try to make improvements to this community. There are reasons most of those have been dashed to the rocks. It’s not that the people didn’t have support, it’s not that they didn’t have good intentions, it’s that when they got questioned to the point at which they did they basically said it isn’t worth it. And you know, maybe I’ve been hit over the head too many times, but I just don’t seem to be able to do that.”

IMAGES (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Watts House Project open house, 2009. Courtesy Watts House Project Los Angeles

Failed Attempt at Crystallization III 2003, glass, sugar crystals, mirror wood, book (Alex Haley, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*), 141 x 46 x 51 cm.
Photo: Gene Ogami. Courtesy Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

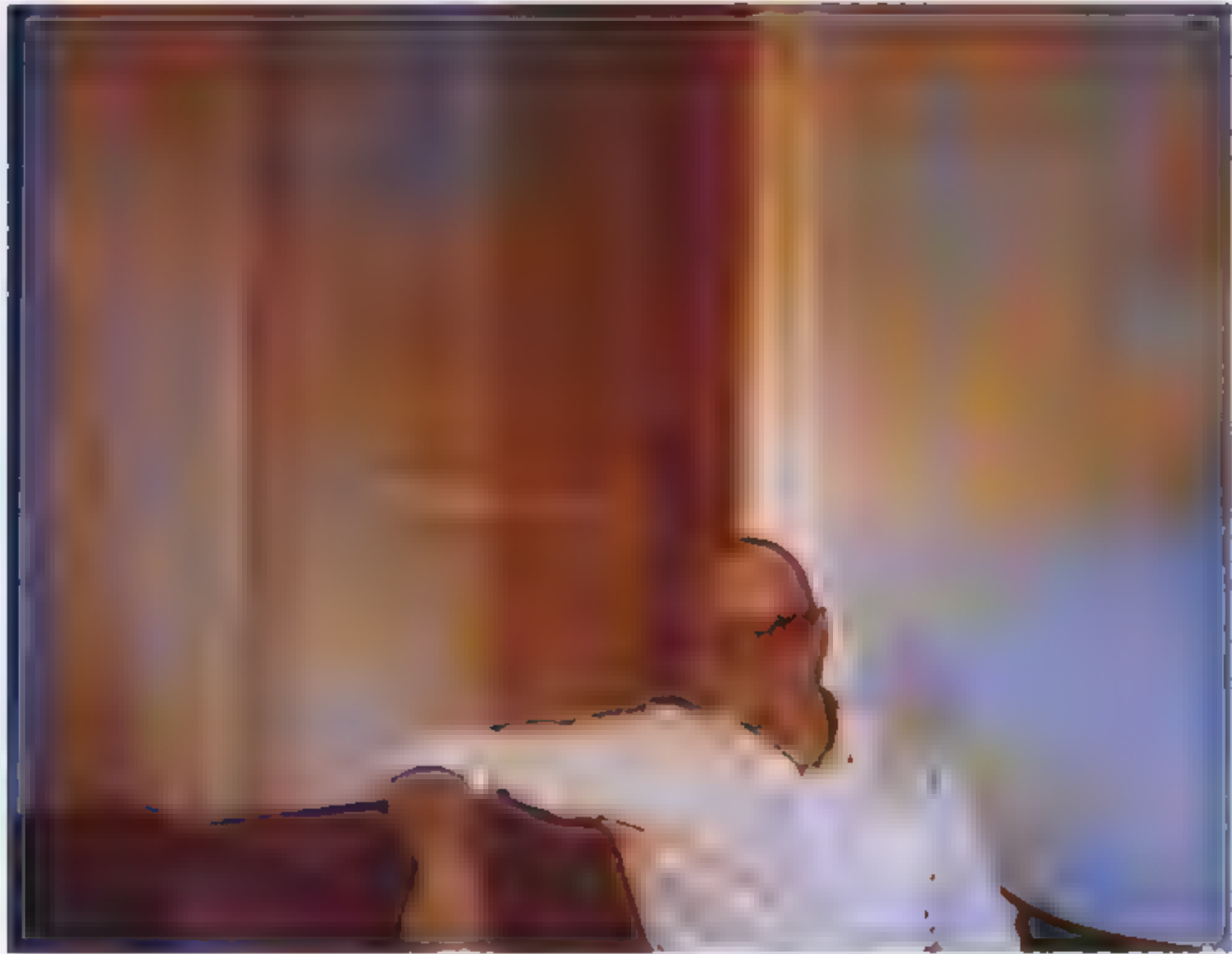
Rosa Coronado, Scott Schrader and friend landscaping the flower house, 2011
Courtesy Watts House Project Los Angeles

The Gods of Detroit 2010 (installation view), from *The Algorithm Doesn't Love You*, an ongoing series. Courtesy Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

The visual correspondence between
Philip-Lorca diCorcia
and **Malerie Marder**
reproduced on the following pages
forms the continuation of a
dialogue via images featured in
Marder's new book, *Carnal*
Knowledge. These photographs are
digital images taken, in most cases,
with the artists' cellphones.

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POLAROID PORTRAITS: MALERIE MARDER
AND PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA

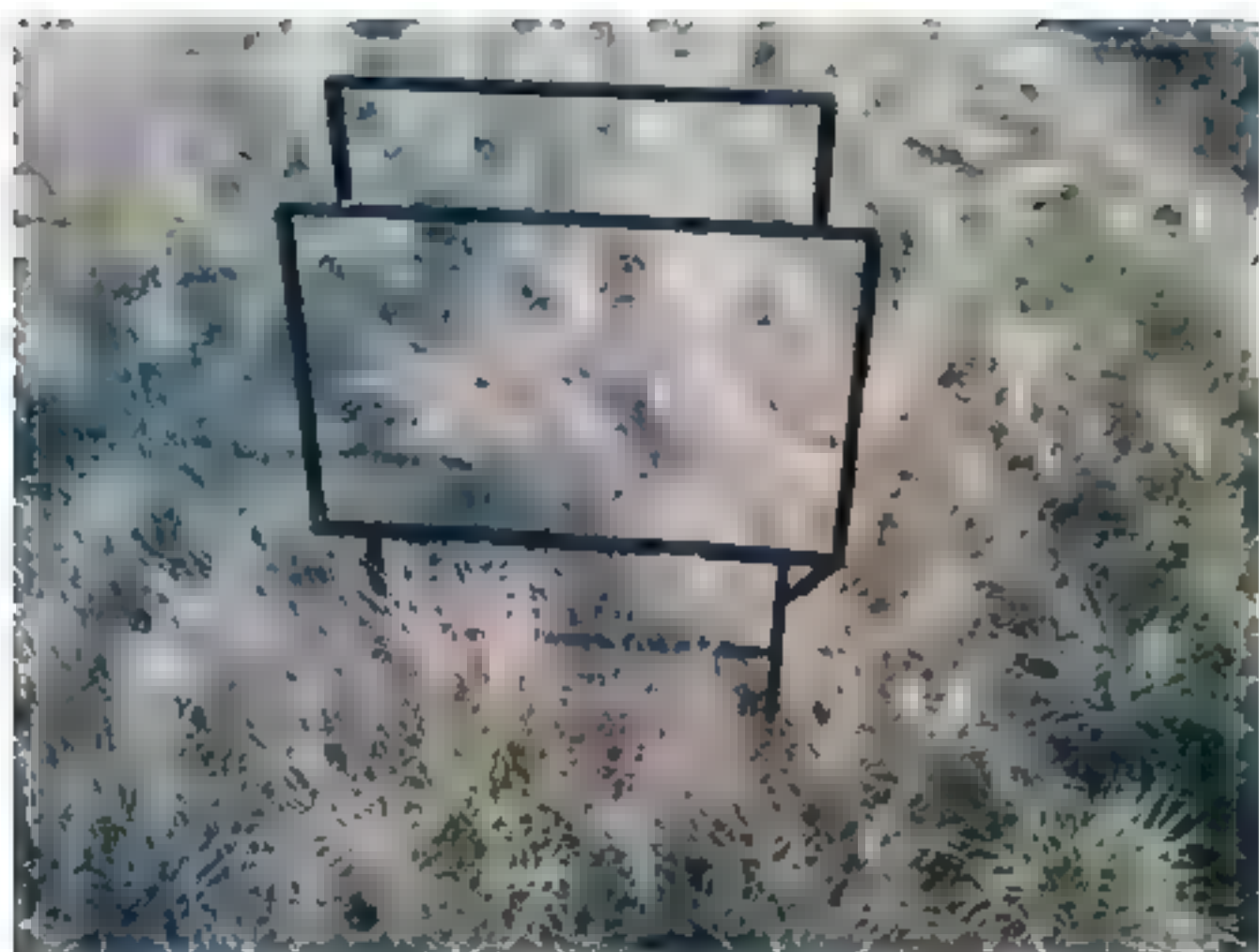


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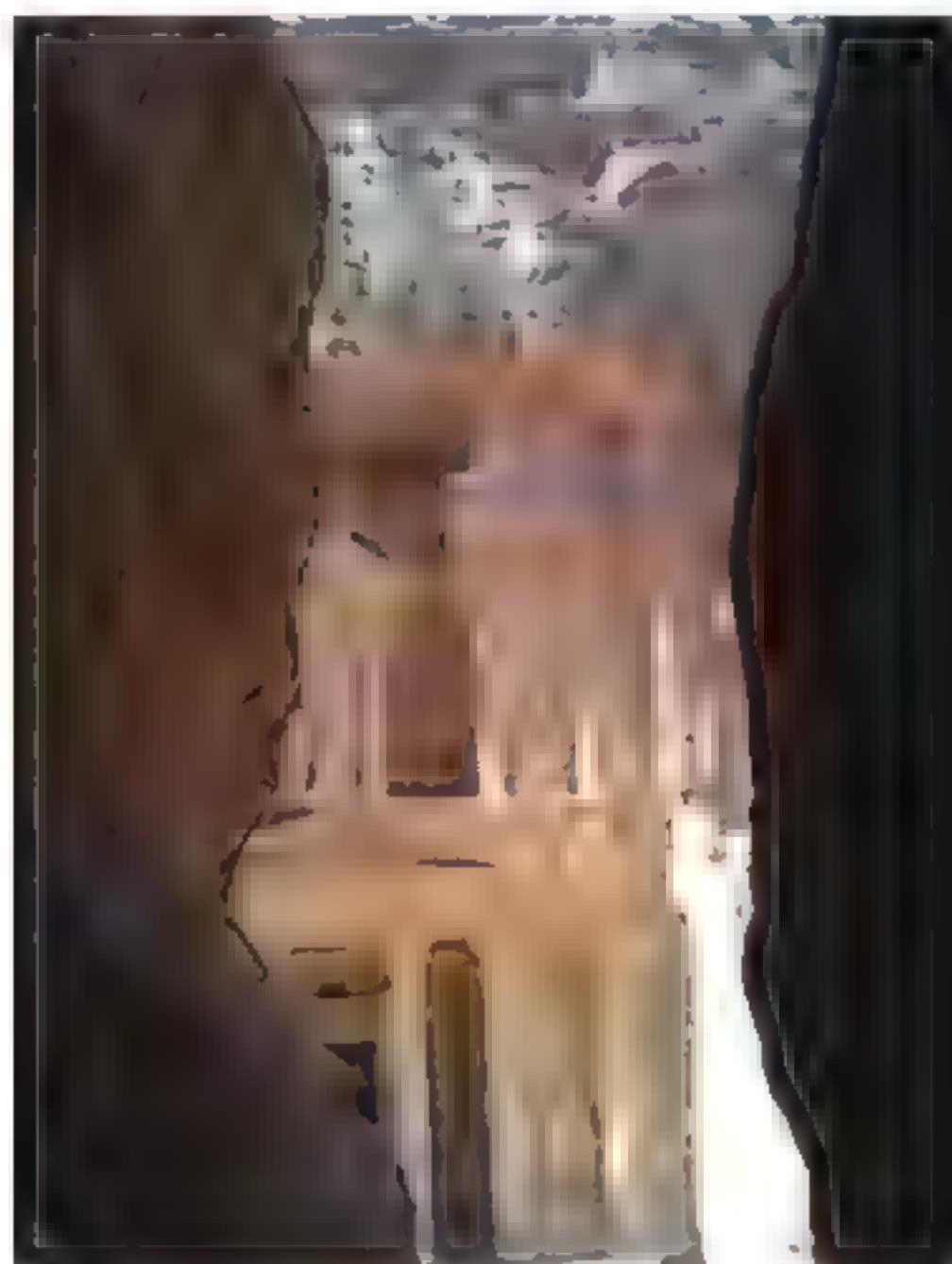


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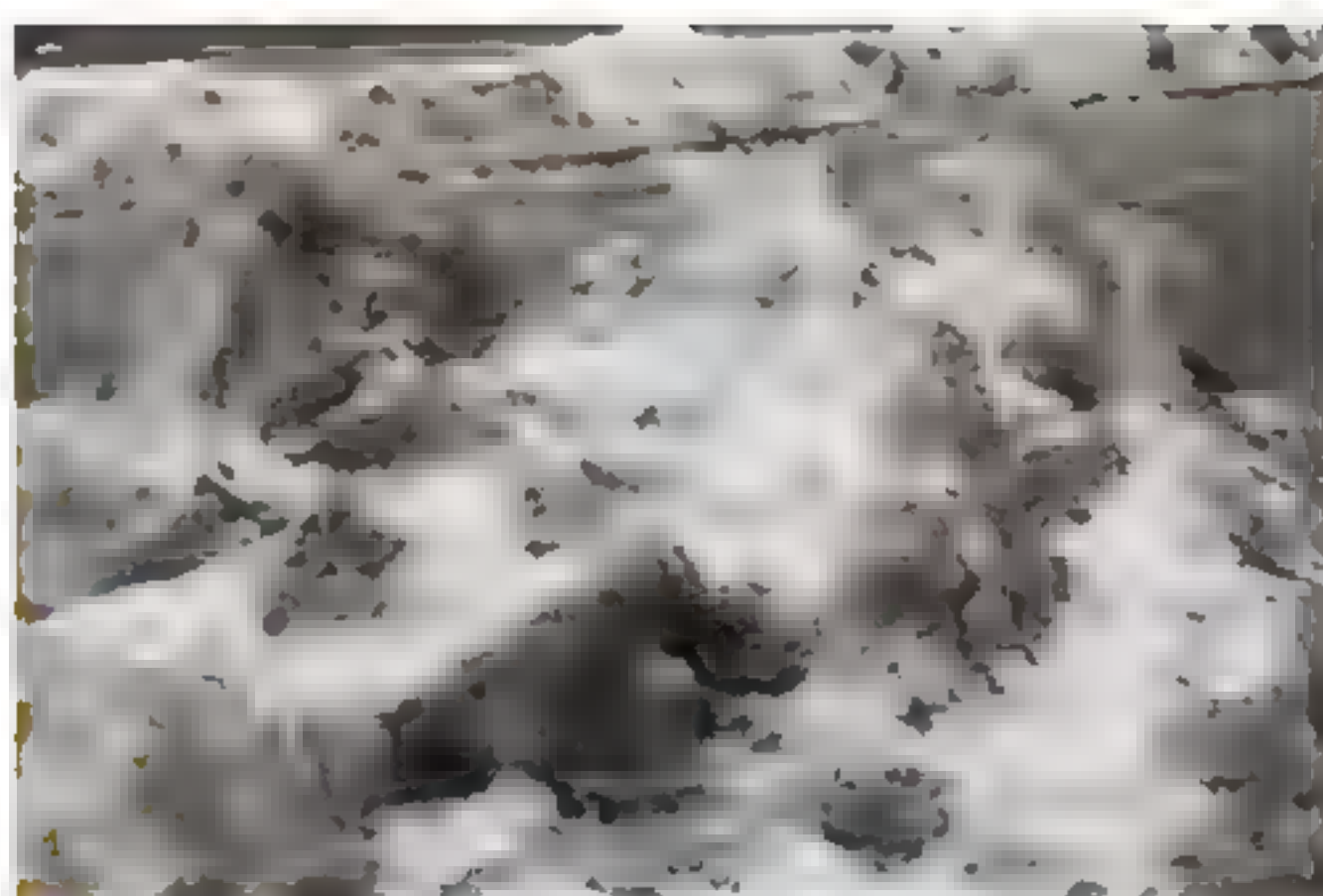
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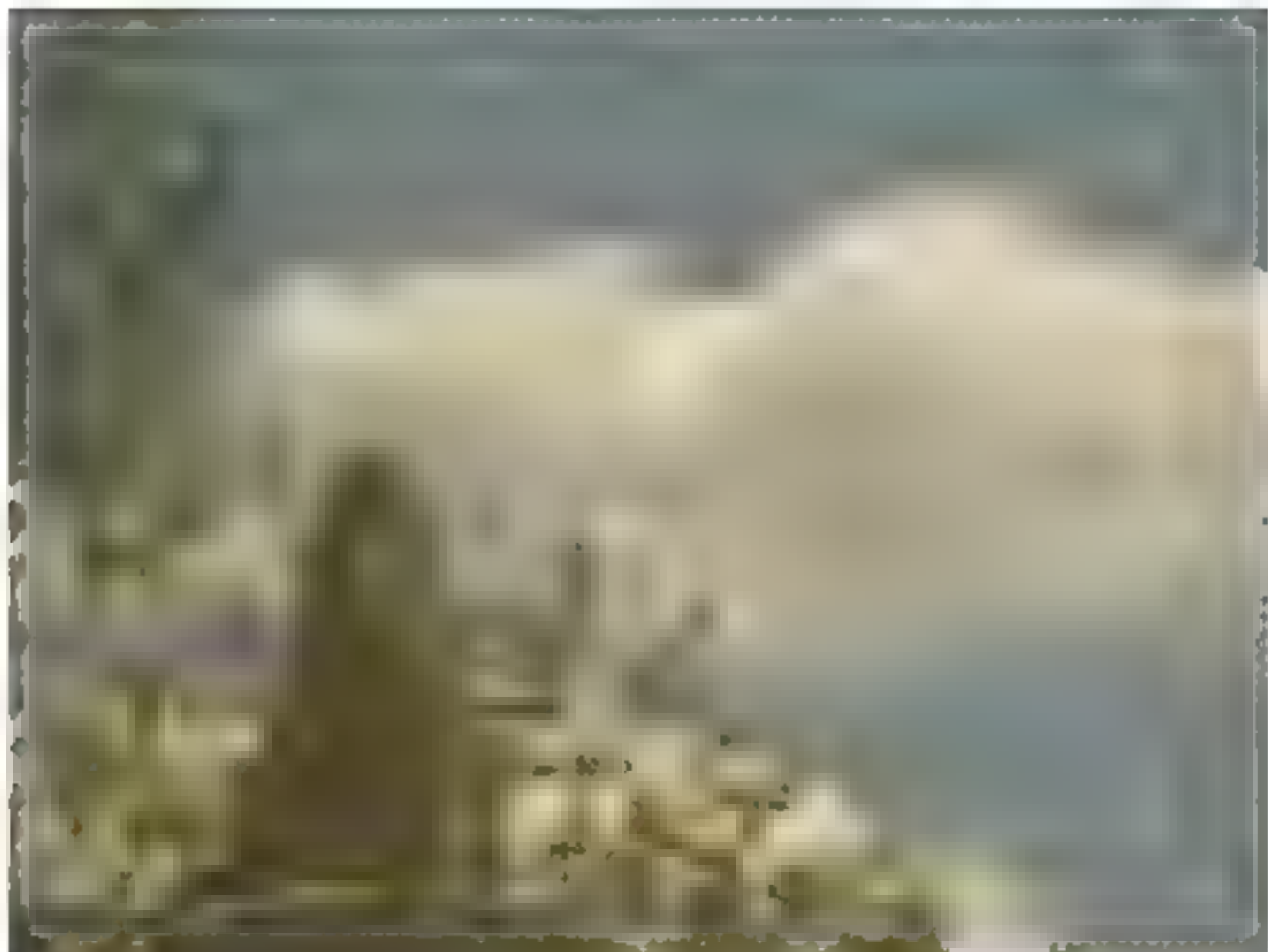


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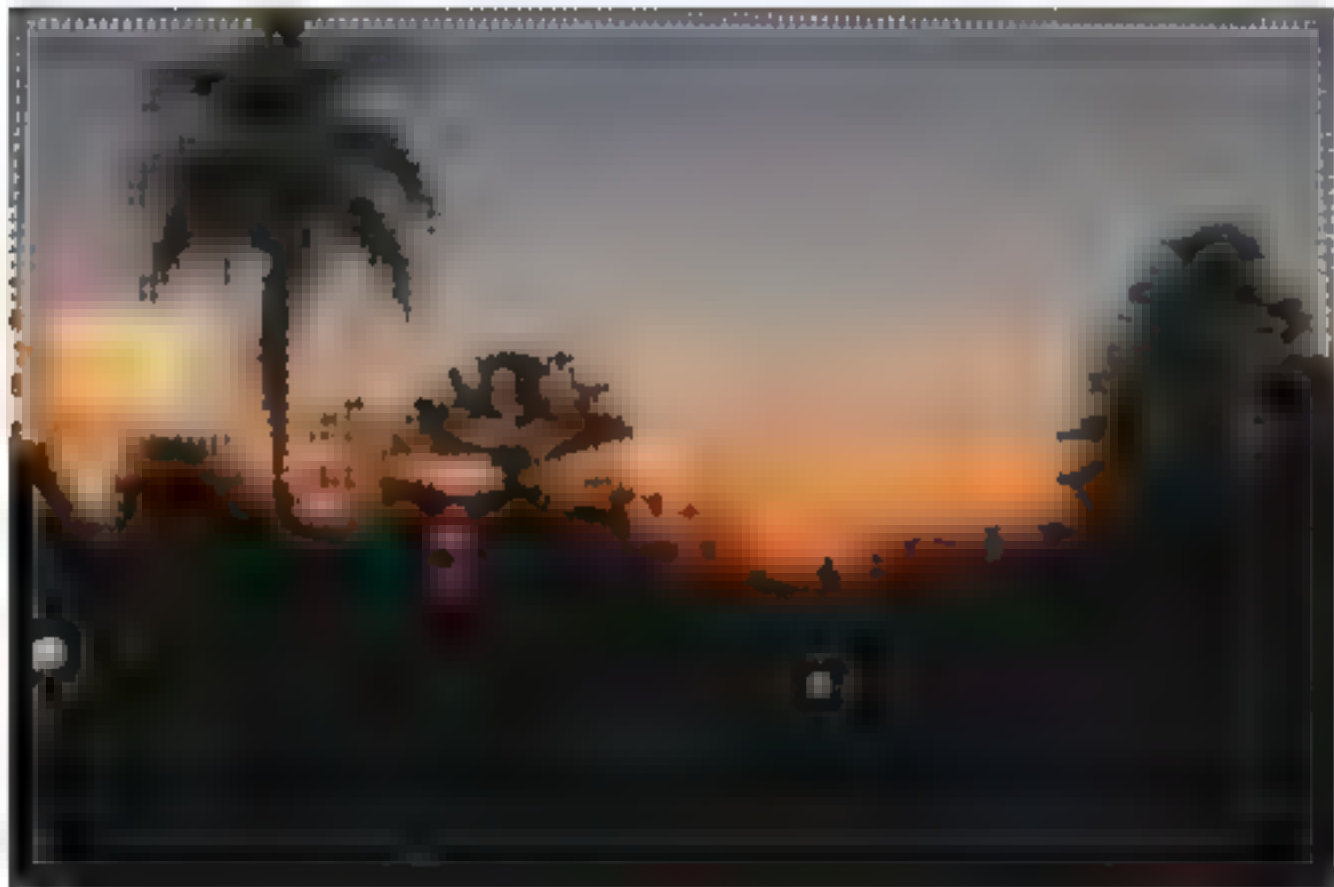


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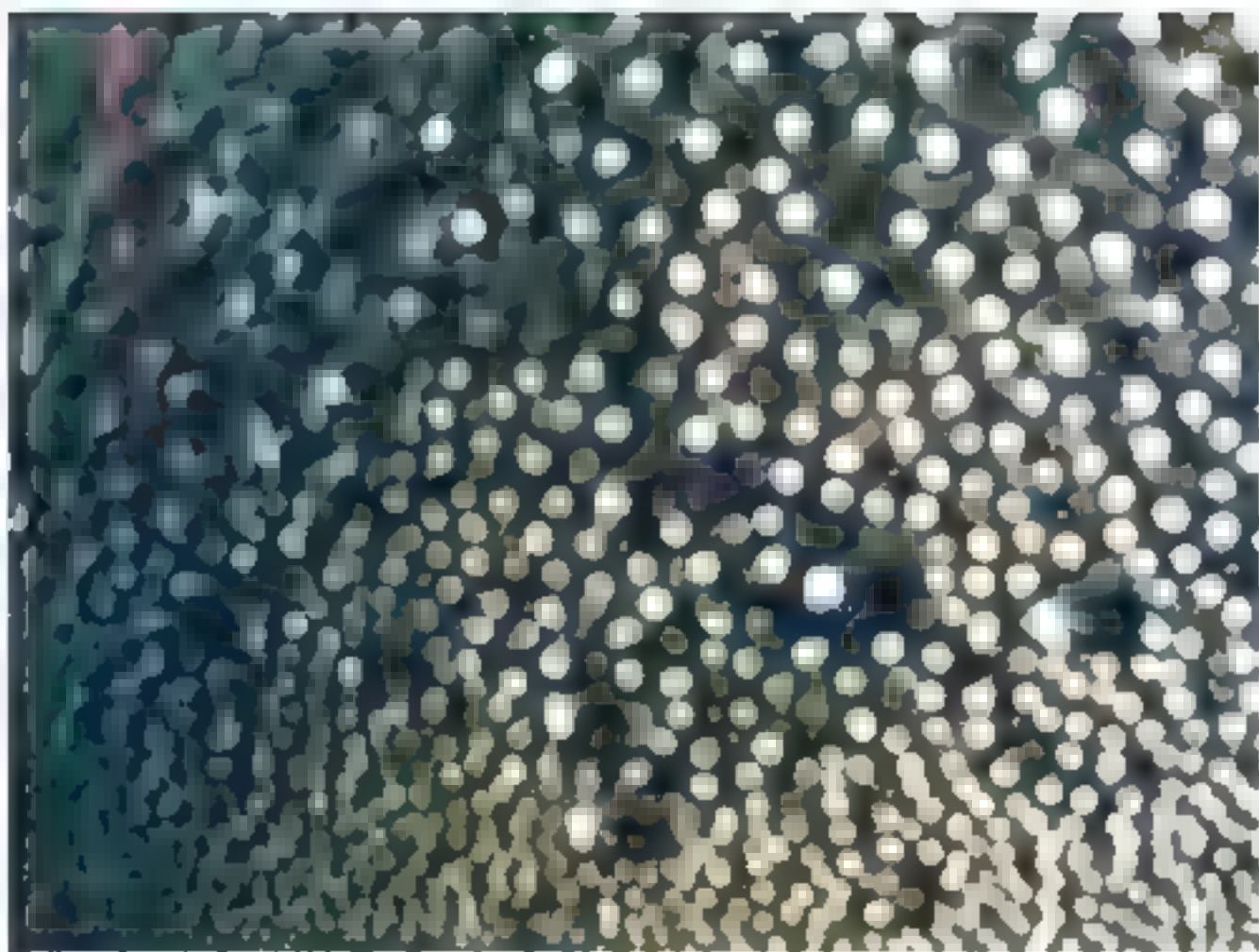




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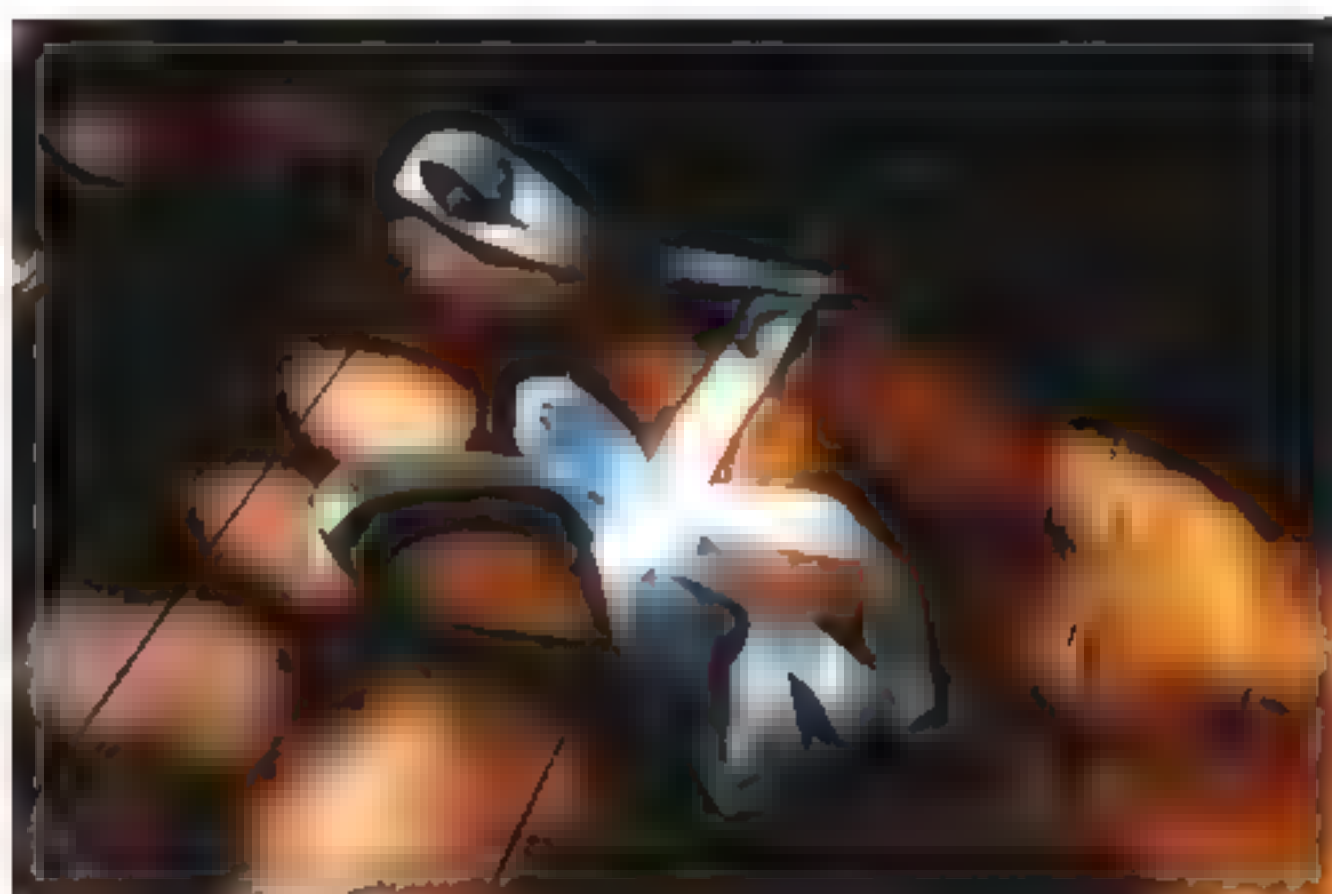


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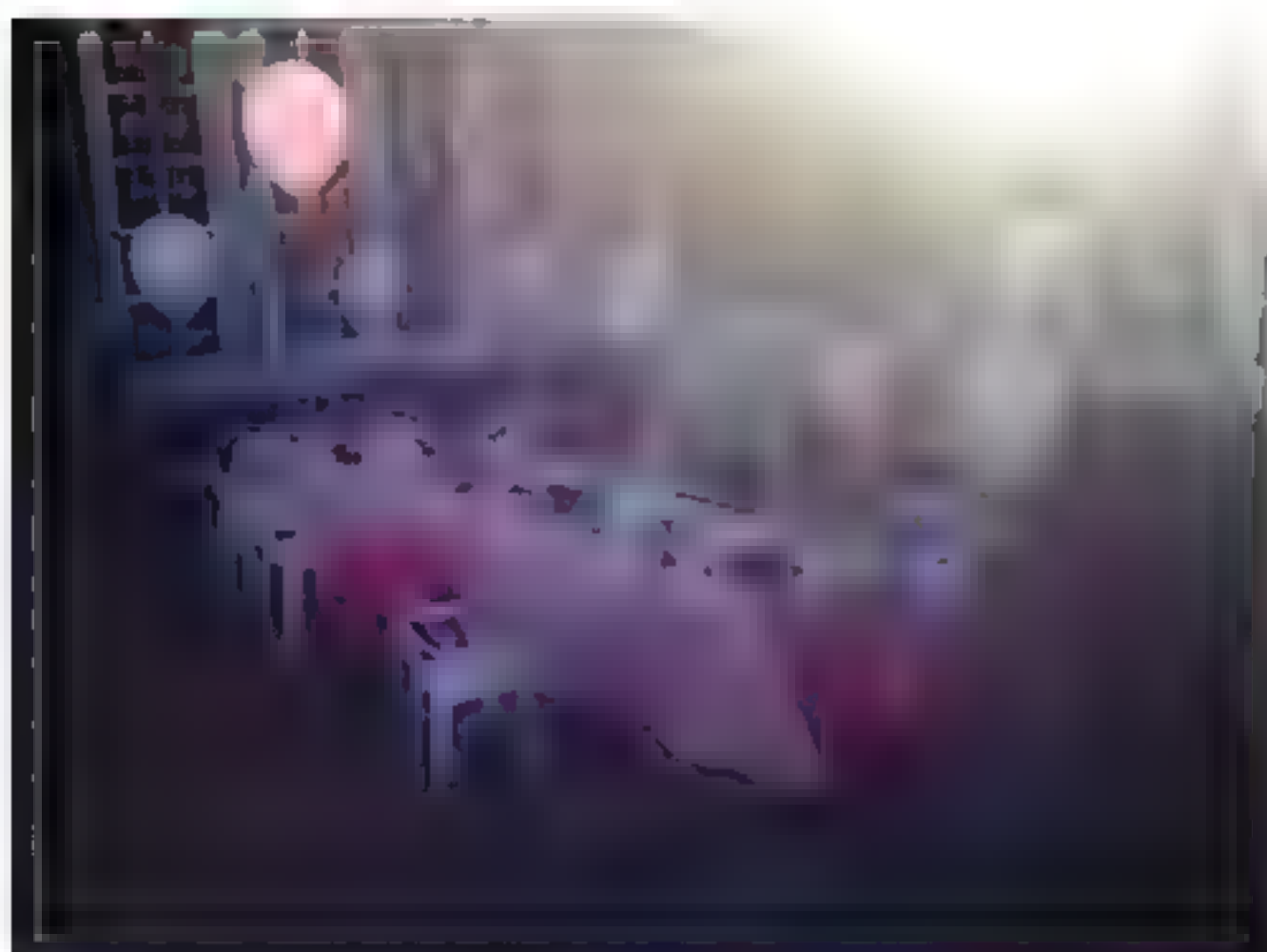
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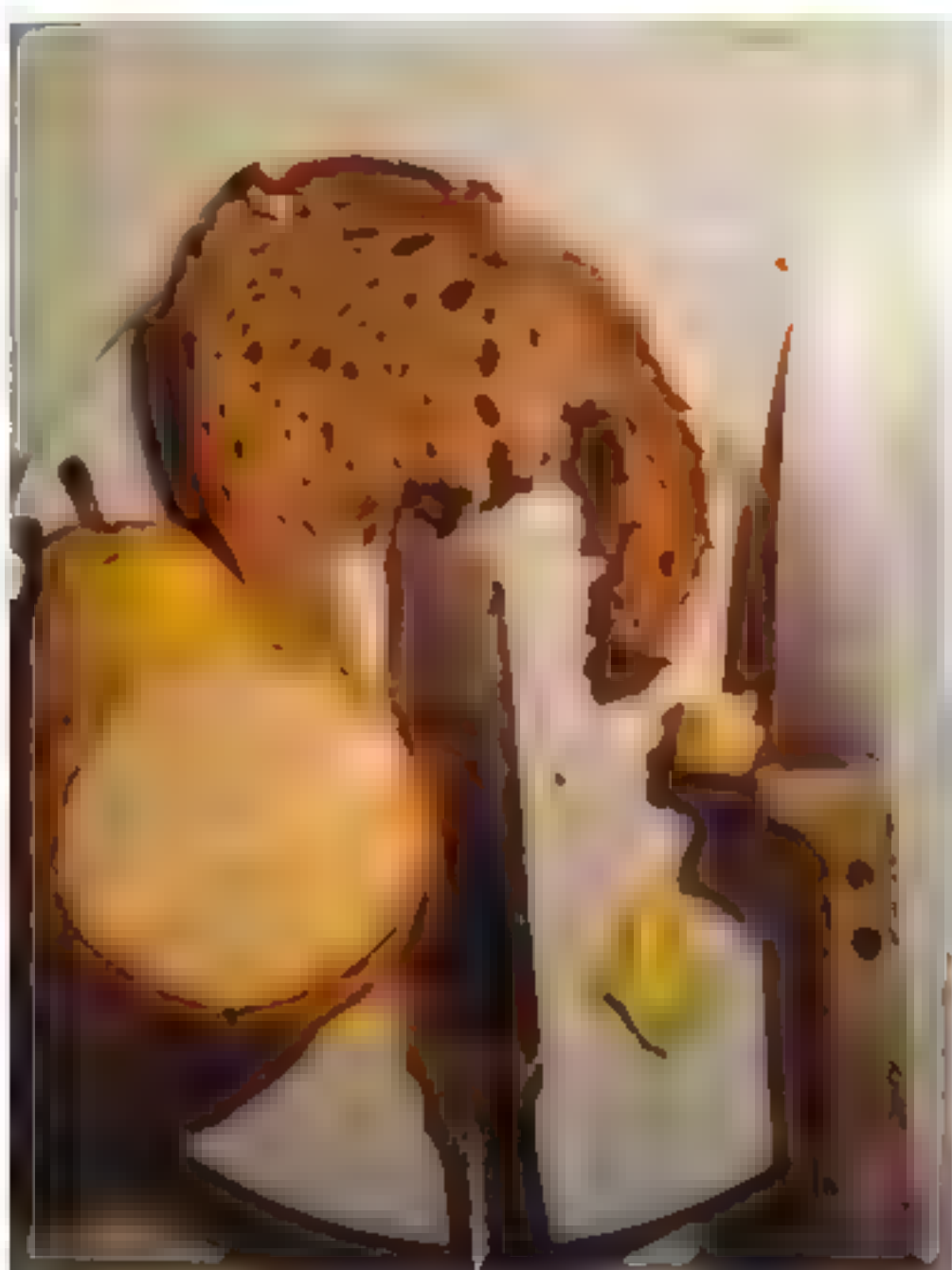


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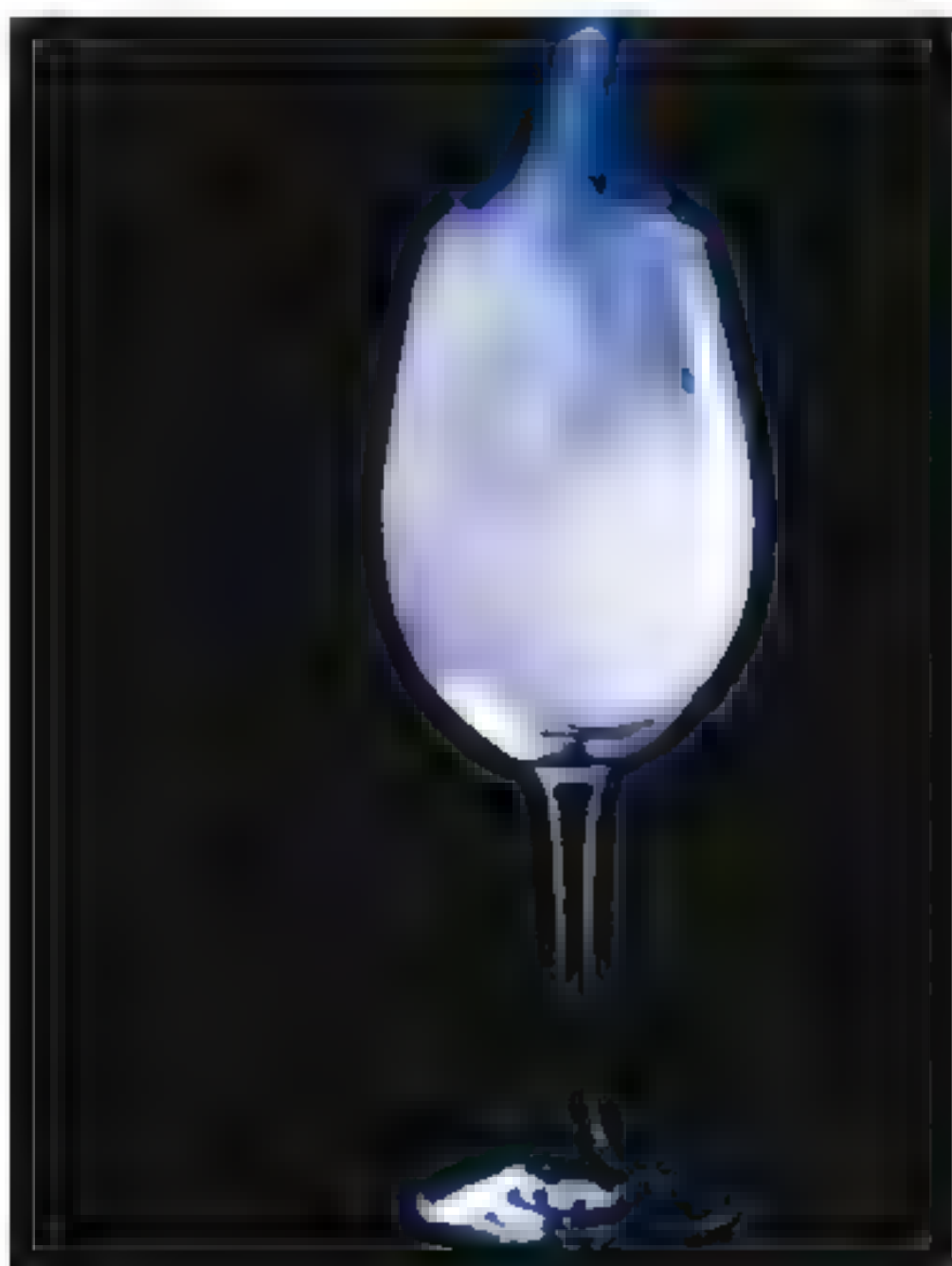
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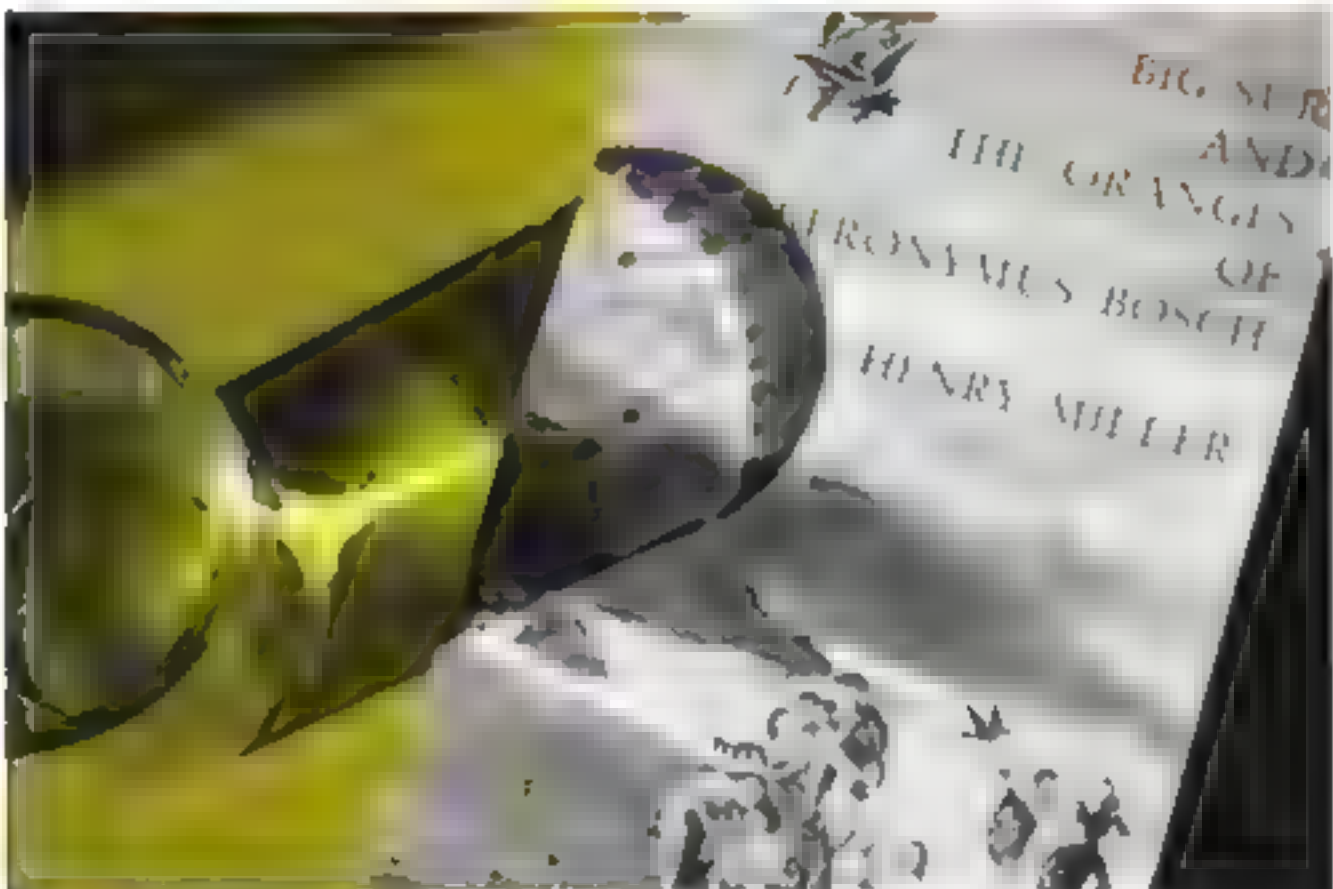


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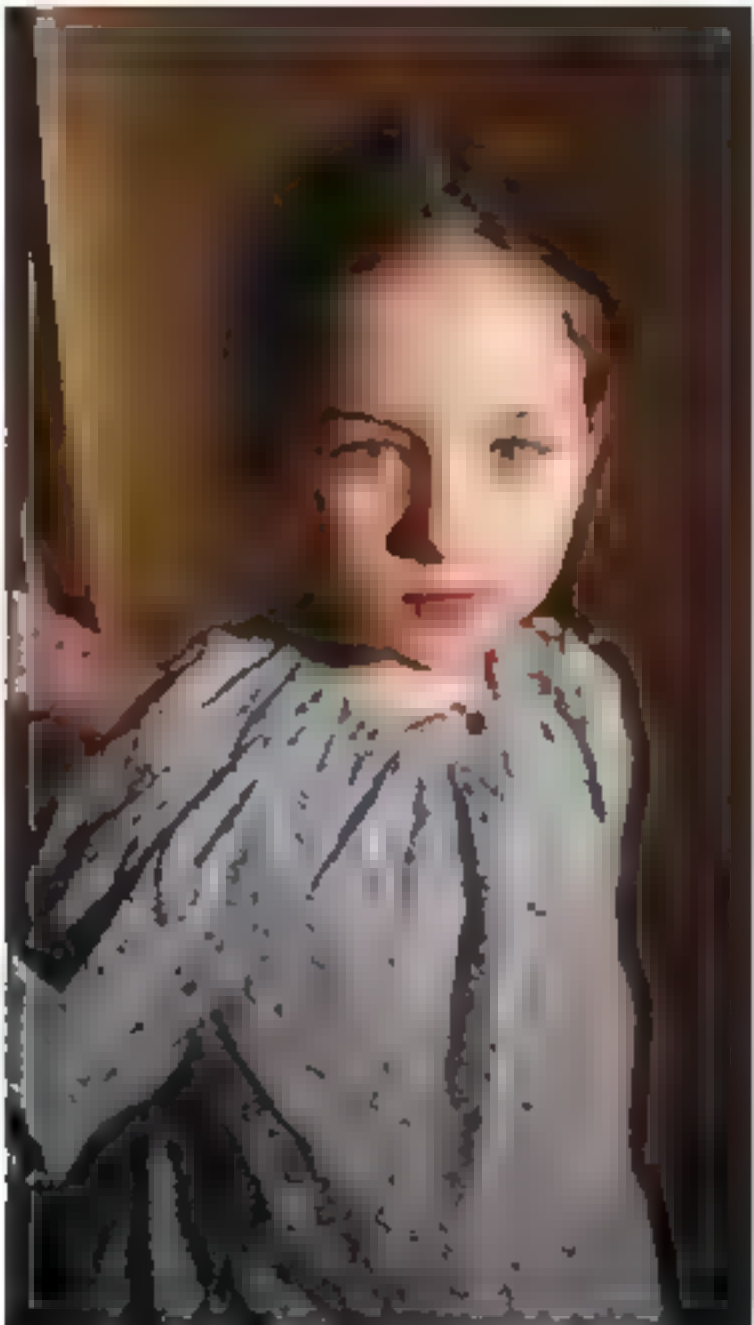
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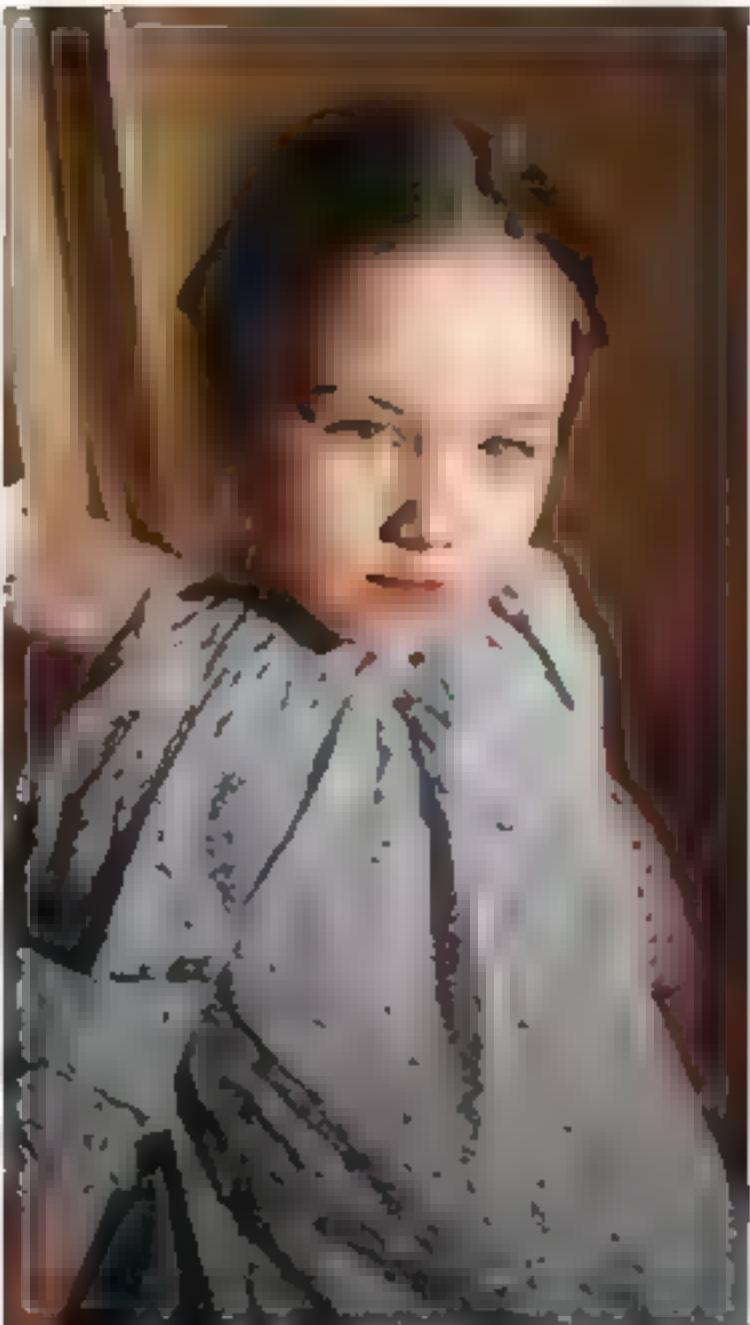
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Malerie Marder: *Carnal Knowledge* is published in April by Violette Editions. A display of previously unexhibited work from *Carnal Knowledge* will be on show at Blain|Southern, London, from 6 to 21 April

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Kalendoskop by Vidar Koksvik Photo: Kirsti Mørch
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Daniel Richter: on set design, politics and why, if he'd had the talent, he would have been a violinist instead of a painter

INTERVIEW: DENISE WENDEL-PORAY



EVER SINCE OSKAR KOKOSCHKA designed the sets for its 1955 production of *The Magic Flute*, the annual Salzburg Festival has had a strong commitment to including the visual arts within its programme of music and performing arts. In the past it has commissioned sets from artists such as Robert Longo, Jörg Immendorff, Robert Wilson, Jan Fabre and Rebecca Horn. For 2010, his final season as the festival's artistic director, Jürgen Flimm continued this tradition by commissioning the German painter Daniel Richter to create stage designs for a performance of Alban Berg's unfinished opera *Lulu*, based on Frank Wedekind's expressionist plays *Pandora's Box* (1904) and *Earth Spirit* (1895).

ArtReview: *What is the importance of music in your life?*

Daniel Richter: Music is the most comforting of all arts. My musical taste is extremely varied: from reggae to blues to Scott Walker to Shostakovich and twentieth-century composition, especially German composers. I find there's nothing so beautiful as music. If I could be an acceptable violinist, then I would rather do that, I think, than be a painter.

AR: *You created the decor for Béla Bartók's opera Bluebeard's Castle (1911) at the Salzburg Festival in 2008. How did you come to choose Lulu for your second collaboration here?*

DR: In the autumn of 2009 I was asked if I wanted to do another set, and Jürgen Flimm gave me the choice of Alban Berg's *Lulu* or a new opera by Wolfgang Rihm. I asked a close friend, Jonathan Meese, if he would be interested in doing one of these projects, and we tossed it around. I finally opted for Berg because it stems from a tradition of modernity that was deeply rooted in the early twentieth century. I like to confront these traditions, not in the sense of competing with them but rather by relating to other people's works and interpretations. You can write yourself into a tradition by offering an expansion that nobody else has thought of, but that can only come from something that already exists.

AR: *The three large paintings that you adapted as sets for Lulu, and which function as backdrops for each of the three acts, are based on preexisting works that seem to be full of references to painters James Ensor and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.*

DR: As an artist I tried to use this imagery, taking the brushstrokes and transforming them, dragging them through the twentieth century into the twenty-first, which is what I think is always the goal: you want it to look modern or at least contemporary. But more than by Expressionism as such, I feel subconsciously influenced by a certain idea of German structure, or an idea that is expressionistic. I feel way more moved by French modern painting, but that's not at all what my paintings look like, unfortunately.

AR: But one of your paintings for *Lulu* has associations with the nightmarish crowds in works like Ensor's *Self-Portrait with Masks* (1899) or the masklike faces of the public in Félix Vallotton's *Au Français, Troisième Galerie, Impression de Théâtre* (1909).

DR: Vallotton, Vuillard and Bonnard had a strong impact on me, as did *fin de siècle* art in general – Munch, early Kokoschka, Ensor, Hugo Simberg, Emil Nolde. In 2000, when I considered these works once again, it struck me that the whole struggle for progress had declined with the end of the Cold War. Everybody knows this, but it was revelatory to me. If you look at the French paintings you mentioned, you can see how intelligent the image is. You realise that at the time it was done it was already self-reflective, that it was crossing the line into other artforms – Japanese woodcuts, photography – and expanding the whole tradition of painting, while using dots or presenting different brushstrokes. It was already what we consider, today, to be a contemporary artwork

AR: Do you think that the same thing holds true for the listener of *Lulu* – a work begun in 1928, employing the serial, 12-tone techniques then in use – and Wedekind's expressionist text?

DR: It is even more obvious with music, because in the moment when it operates on the listener, he owns it – whether he is in the present day or in 1928. Less so for the text, but then I am not a big admirer of Wedekind's literature or the libretto of *Lulu*. But he does say something in his diaries that I was able to identify with: he states that the self-established traditions of the artist are only there to be used and broken. So, if I say one thing today and the opposite tomorrow, it's OK – betrayal as an artistic concept

AR: What inspired the stage design for the first scene, the portrait of *Lulu*?

DR: The portrait is that of the singer who interprets *Lulu*, the French soprano Patricia Petibon. I had only seen her twice; the result is a sort of lowbrow version of the Klimt or Schiele women. She is kitsch, sweet, too sweet, and the painting is really an enlarged version of the centrefold of *Playboy*: it is *Lulu* spreading out to the public. The centrefold is an icon of the twentieth century and the first respectable pornography in our society. I tried to depict Patricia as very vague and watercolour-y, without being too vulgar, and at the same time using it to tie into the Vienna Secession tradition.

The structure of the opera *Lulu* is a mirror image; her social ascension in the first half is reflected as her demise in the second. The huge mirror with the big red blotch, which constitutes the second major set of the opera, seems to refer to this structural aspect. The mirror which replaces *Lulu*'s portrait in Scene 3 of Act



I is the transformation of *Lulu* from a private person into a public person. She's someone who goes onstage to prostitute herself, to offer herself to princes. We can see her in the mirror, but she can't see us: this is her nonawareness of herself. It's also a reference to early Pop art, especially Rosenquist's.

AR: The pyramid that you place on the stage at this point – which looks like a giant version of Man Ray's metronome (*Object to Be Destroyed*, 1923) – transforms, little by little, into a central and functional piece of set design. Did you discuss that with the director, Vera Nemirova?

DR: I decided the whole thing and then we had a debate about what the pyramid represents: hierarchy, remnants of a glorious past, a Steinway piano in a luxurious salon, an opaque object. It represents bourgeois life and its antithesis: the guillotine or a coffin. It's also just a really precisely shaped object like that at the beginning of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

AR: *Complex alterations in the lighting trigger numerous colour changes on the paintings. How did you bring those about?*

DR: These paintings are done in such a way that they can only evolve with the light, which is absolutely indispensable to the finality of their realisation. Achieving this was a complex process, and I had conflicts with everybody in the production – especially the lighting technician, who had worked for directors like Hans Neuenfels and Patrice Chéreau, and the first thing that he said to me was that my stage set was not a stage set. It was hard, and even if I knew what I wanted, I couldn't always translate it into language that the lighting crew could understand. It is really a collective, complex process, which makes you very dependent on the offers that the lighting designer makes. The light is so essential because it can change from a dominant green into yellow, and the very thin lines into deep purple, creating an infrared effect. I wanted the thing to live. I wanted the paranoia of Dr Schön [Lulu's husband, later murdered] to begin with a pulsating red and a great moment, and I am grateful to the lighting crew for this, when Lulu appears and sings "Freedom, freedom" and an amazing red-orange light makes the painting glow; it is like looking at the tone.

'Looking at the tone' is what Kandinsky was trying to achieve with his 'colour-tone drama' *Der Gelbe Klang* (*The Yellow Sound*, 1909), where the goal was a specific equivalence between musical tone and colour. What was so complicated for people of that generation, though, was that the search for modern painting

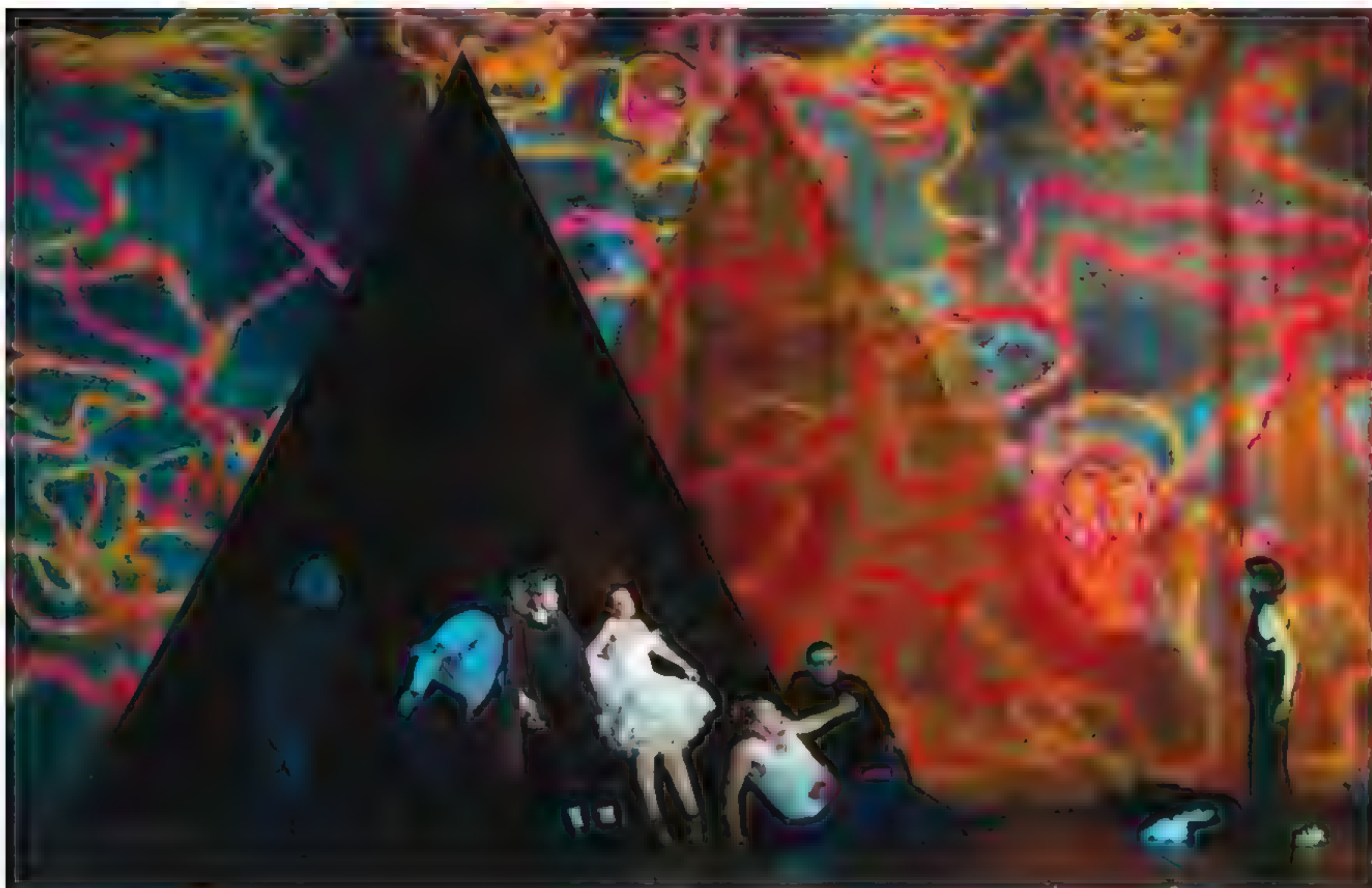
demanded nonfiguration. Nowadays we do whatever seems right, because the debate about Modernism and postmodernism has lost its authority. Picasso despised Bonnard, saying that his art was locked in the nineteenth century: nowadays that is meaningless.

That's the problem of the temporality of a work of art. But there is also the question of how it is perceived in the moment, as in a museum, as opposed to sequentially throughout the duration of a theatre piece. The perception of an artwork within an opera is different to the contemplative process of looking at a single painting in the context of a room. It's just the opposite; it's 1,500 people sitting in that hall, from left to right, from poor to educated, from stubborn to shallow to sensitive, and they all kind of bring it alive. It's a collective. Even if we all look at them as individuals, we smell and breathe the moment together as the music evolves, and in that moment we're not alone.

AR: *The theatre is clearly an ideal forum for the themes that engender your work. Where within the operatic repertoire might you go next?*

DR: There is one piece that I have loved since I was a teenager, which has unfortunately become the cliché of leftist bad art, and that is Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. It's a very beautiful, weird mix of Gershwin, Brahms and Schoenberg, and in it are some of the most beautiful melodies of the twentieth century.





AR: You also love Shostakovich, but a piece like his *Die Nase* (The Nose, 1928), for example, would seemingly pose the dilemma of historical and political context versus the true nature of the music as well

DR: *Die Nase* is a masterpiece, and Shostakovich is the tragic, struggling, politicised, hailed and dismissed figure he was under Stalin – a crucifical figure of the twentieth century in my eyes. I see him as very different from Furtwängler or Strauss, who collaborated with the Nazis. He was more of a hysterical madman, and you hear that in works like his 1944 piano trio in E minor. I can't distance Shostakovich from his music and the man from the Soviet Union at all

AR: Shostakovich is a prime example of a political artist. Do you feel yourself to be one?

DR: I can't compare myself to a figure like Shostakovich, but I do consider myself as political. That is really where I'm coming from, but at the same time I'm not very moral about it. In art, I'm searching for contemporariness, something that is unknown to me and not necessarily political in the sense of being active

There was a moment in the 1970s, thanks to the productions of Patrice Chéreau with his famous Ring Cycle and the first three-act version of *Lulu* in 1979, where there was a glimmer of how opera could be intensely political. I think this opportunity still exists, but for that you need people who are immanently political and not just moralists or bigots. The problem is also that directors don't destroy a form; they take an opera libretto and try to give it a provocative interpretation, which is mostly disappointing. How often has the bourgeois form of

theatre been destroyed in the last 50 years – every weekend – so that in the end you just don't care. As a political person, I want change in the streets and the society, which can be reflected in the arts. Everybody jokes about the stupidity and conservatism of the audience, but this is also lying about oneself as an artist. I don't like that attitude; I don't like it from [the philosopher] Boris Groys and I don't like it from stage directors.

AR: Groys says that political art does not exist in the contemporary art market

DR: He's a person who thinks he knows it all but who never has to deal with public response. Those who really respect and love art trust the people. I am interested in truth, which is a very vague word. I like the 'truthfulness' of art.

AR: So in art we are not only dealing with the different questions of movements and aesthetics but with the unfolding of truth.

DR: There is still too much dogmatism in art, whereas there are so many artforms that offer something profound. I am not a one-man political party who says that painting must go in a particular direction – I do my stuff and I hope that it makes sense for some years, and I hope others do the same. ■

ALL IMAGES

Alban Berg's *Lulu*, performed at the Salzburg Festival in 2010, dir Vera Nemirova
Photos: © Salzburg Festival / Monika Rittershaus

France's glass-bead gamester
Jean-Michel
Othoniel is on a roll.
My Way, his giant midcareer
retrospective at the
Pompidou Centre in
Paris moves to Seoul
in the summer, Tokyo
in the fall and
Brooklyn next spring.
He talks with
ArtReview about the
quickenning pace of
the art market, and
the need to do it his
way: face-à-face, and
over a glass of wine.

INTERVIEW: CHRISTOPHER MOONEY

ArtReview: Like the Sinatra song, *My Way* describes the twists and turns in your trajectory as an artist, from the photographic works of the late 1980s, through the sulphur, phosphorus and wax sculptural works in the early 90s, to the monumental work with Murano glass that has become your signature today. What was the most important fight of your artistic life?

Jean-Michel Othoniel: The fight for beauty. When I was at L'Ecole de Beaux-Arts at the beginning of the 1980s, my teachers were focused on the 'radicality' of Minimalism and Arte Povera, which, for me, was beautiful, but at the time this wasn't considered the case – beauty was just not a focus. I remember those first Sol LeWitt watercolours in 1986 or 88, all those pinks and yellows, and it was a big scandal in the minimalist world, because everyone was saying it was not radical enough, it's not black and white, what is he doing? He is totally crazy... he is making references to Siena and the frescoes, and it was a big thing against him. But I loved it, I thought it was great. He was doing something new, mixing radicality and beauty. I've always done beautiful things: it's part of my work. And now the world has changed, so now people say, "Your work is so in the present; it's connected to what Jeff Koons is doing". For me, my work is not about kitsch, not about Pop. People look at it that way, but it's not really what I am talking about. There is no distance, no irony in my work.

AR: Koons says the same thing, that there is no irony in his work.

JMO: Yeah, but... Maybe for him there is no irony. As an artist, you can't be ironic about your work. But the work can speak about irony. It's really strange – it seems my work is finally in the right time, the right moment. But it has been a hard road.

AR: You've also moved towards nobler and rarer materials, like the gold leaf in the giant Murano glass necklace (*Sans Titre (Collier Doré)*, 2010), or the amber and alexandrite in the double necklace (*Le Collier Double*, 2010), and the amber in the new wall piece (*The Precious Stonewall*, 2010).

JMO: No, that's pigment. *The Precious Stonewall* was born from my experimentation with glass in Firozabad, in India. The thousands of bricks in it were blown and polished by Indian craftsmen. But as for using nobler materials, well, yes and no. For example, I've always refused to work with crystal. I love to work with glass because glass is simple, in a way, less refined, more basic. It's sand that you melt and it becomes glass. It's primitive. The way I entered the world of glass was through the first glass, in its most basic form.





AR: *Obsidian.*

JMO: Yes. The glass of volcanoes, which I discovered in the Aeolian Islands. The work I produced with it (*Le Contrepet*, 1992) was the key to entering the world of glass, but it actually started with white sand – we melted Lipari pumice stone to create, or rather, ‘recreate’ it. Obsidian, however, is black and nontransparent and difficult to play with, because it requires such high temperatures, so I started exploring other forms of it. I was not fascinated by glass as a material, I was fascinated by the transformation of this material, its metamorphosis. After, I started playing with its whole material range. I was the first artist to start working with Murano glassblowers. At the time they weren’t interested in working with contemporary artists; they had too much work already. I kept bugging them, and eventually they let me into their world. Perhaps one day I will jump to something else, like photography. Or writing. My dream is to be a writer. You can be everywhere, you don’t need a studio or assistants. You just need paper. For me, the writer is the perfect artist, because he is totally free. And this idea of freedom is also something that I fight for. That’s why for years I was travelling, moving from Berlin to Hong Kong to New York to Mexico to Barcelona and Madrid, because I was fighting this idea of being stuck somewhere. Because I think freedom is very important for the work – to put it in the work, so people can feel it.

AR: *You’ve had a number of confrontations with dealers’ and collectors’ expectations each time you’ve changed course. And you have fought against this.*

JMO: This really began with Documenta [IX, 1992], where I showed my sulphur sculptures. People expected me to continue producing works in sulphur. I was very young and unprepared for this visibility of my work. But now things have changed. At that time, there were not so many magazines, not so much interest in art in fashion magazines and normal magazines. Art was really for specialists, and Documenta was the big fair. Everyone was looking at just one thing and so focused on the artist and saying, “Oh, I want this piece”, and they really didn’t care about the world of the artist. They wanted the same thing over and over again. And I don’t repeat. I never make the same thing twice. I describe myself as a sculptor, but a sculptor is usually someone who makes an edition of, say, eight of the same piece... so I am really not in this process.

AR: *You’ve talked about the freedom that commissions, both for private collectors and fashion houses like Chanel and Louis Vuitton, give you.*

JMO: I love commissions, because the art market is so vast now. I say ‘art market’, whereas ten years ago I would have said ‘artworld’. The artworld is so connected to the money and the market that you don’t have intimacy, something the artist needs. I think many of the artists that I like are alone in their own world. This idea of community has gone. For example, the fairs are not moments where people are happy to be together, where you can meet an artist from Argentina you met ten years ago and have a drink, or open a bottle with a dealer, like we did 20 years ago. Now the artist has no time for that! You have 20 collectors to see; the dealer is so stressed because he wants to sell in the first hour or otherwise he has lost... I don’t know... It is something... terrible. So I think this intimacy, you really have it with a commissioned project. You have someone to talk with. And it is more and more difficult to have this feeling with museums. The curators have no time to see you. Only ten minutes. They have a conference call, whatever... It’s crazy. It’s not this idea of family, this being in front of a real person. And with a commission you still have that. You can have a very strong dialogue one-to-one. Making something for someone, especially if it’s a site-specific project. They won’t just turn around and sell it, put it on the market after six months or one year. Because it is made for them. And this is something very important. :

Jean-Michel Othoniel: My Way is at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, through 23 May

WORKS
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Bannière n° 1, 2003, Murano glass, steel, 390 cm (height), collection the artist

Bannière n° 2, 2003, Murano glass, steel, 350 cm (height), collection the artist

Both Works

Photo: Patrick Gnes. © the artist / Adagp, Paris 2011
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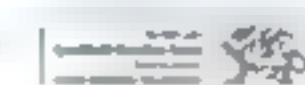
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What the folk say

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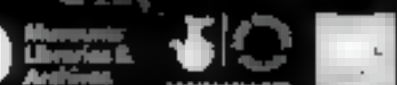


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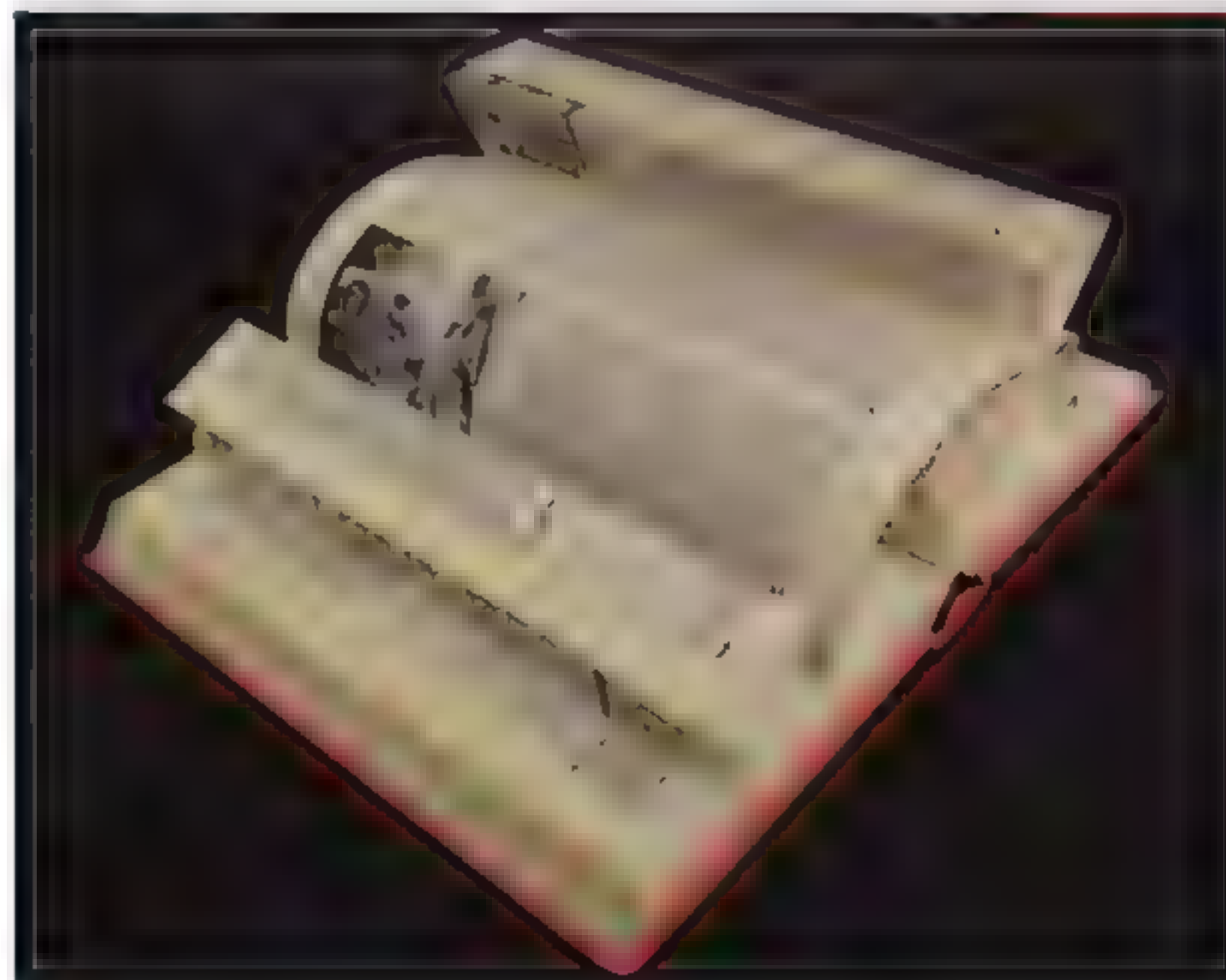
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Meet David Walsh, the man behind the Museum of Old and New Art.

Daring, disrespectful even,

Walsh has torn up

the institutional

rule book. But when

your museum is set

in a vineyard near

Hobart, Tasmania,

and far from pretty

much everything

else, perhaps that is

what's called for.

Will the gamble pay

off?

-

WORDS MARK RAPPOLT

PHOTOGRAPHY FLORA HANITJO

Where are you going?

Tasmania

Crikey! And you say you've never been to Australia before?

Nope

Crikey! If I may ask, why are you going there?

To see an art museum.

Near Hobart?

Uh-huh.

Aaaaahhh... you mean the Tasmanian Museum. There's not much art there, mate - it's tiny and mainly full of stuffed Tasmanian Devils.

No, it's a new one; private.

Oh, yeah? Who owns it?

This millionaire gambler guy.

Is he gay?

'WHEN THE WHITE MAN FIRST carried the burden and blessing of civilization to the shores of Australia, he found the land inhabited by a very primitive race of people.' That's modern Australia's founding moment as captured by W.J. Thomas in the introduction to his 1923 collection *Some Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines*. The conversation that precedes it was captured sometime during a 16-hour leg of the gruelling journey from London to Tasmania's capital, Hobart, the majority of which was spent in the company of a chatty doctor from Sydney. But while you might be thinking that I'm trying to suggest that, despite the 77 years of 'progress' that separates us, I felt something of a 'connection' with Thomas as I approached the shores of the smallest continent, that's not why I mention the Welshman's writing here

The Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) opened in January and is located 12km north of Hobart in the Moorilla winery (which also brews a range of beers under the Moo Brew label) on the banks of the Derwent River. Its campus includes a concert venue, eight guest pavilions (AUS\$580-950 a night) and two restaurants, while the museum itself contains everything from ancient arrowheads, an octadrachm of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (c. 265-246 BCE) and the door jamb from the tomb of Khnumhotep (c. 2345-2181 BCE), to Sidney Nolan's epic *Snake* (1970-2), a Damien Hirst spin painting, Tamy Ben-Tor's video performance *The End of Art* (2006) and commissioned works such as Christian Boltanski's *The Life of C.B.* (2010-). The last is a live streaming video of the next eight years of the artist's life, paid for in 96 instalments across that time: the collector bets that the artist will die soon, so he'll get a bargain; the sixty-six-year-old French artist presumes he's got at least another eight years to go and will be handsomely rewarded for his 'efforts'. Oh, yes, David Walsh, MONA's proprietor, is a professional gambler. And perhaps to Boltanski's eventual detriment, an extremely successful one

But if ever civilisation felt like a burden, it does so here. With its somewhat-forbidding-yet-oddly-earthly Corten and concrete cladding,



above: Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), on the grounds of the Museum of Art, a walkway,
below: MONA's David Walsh

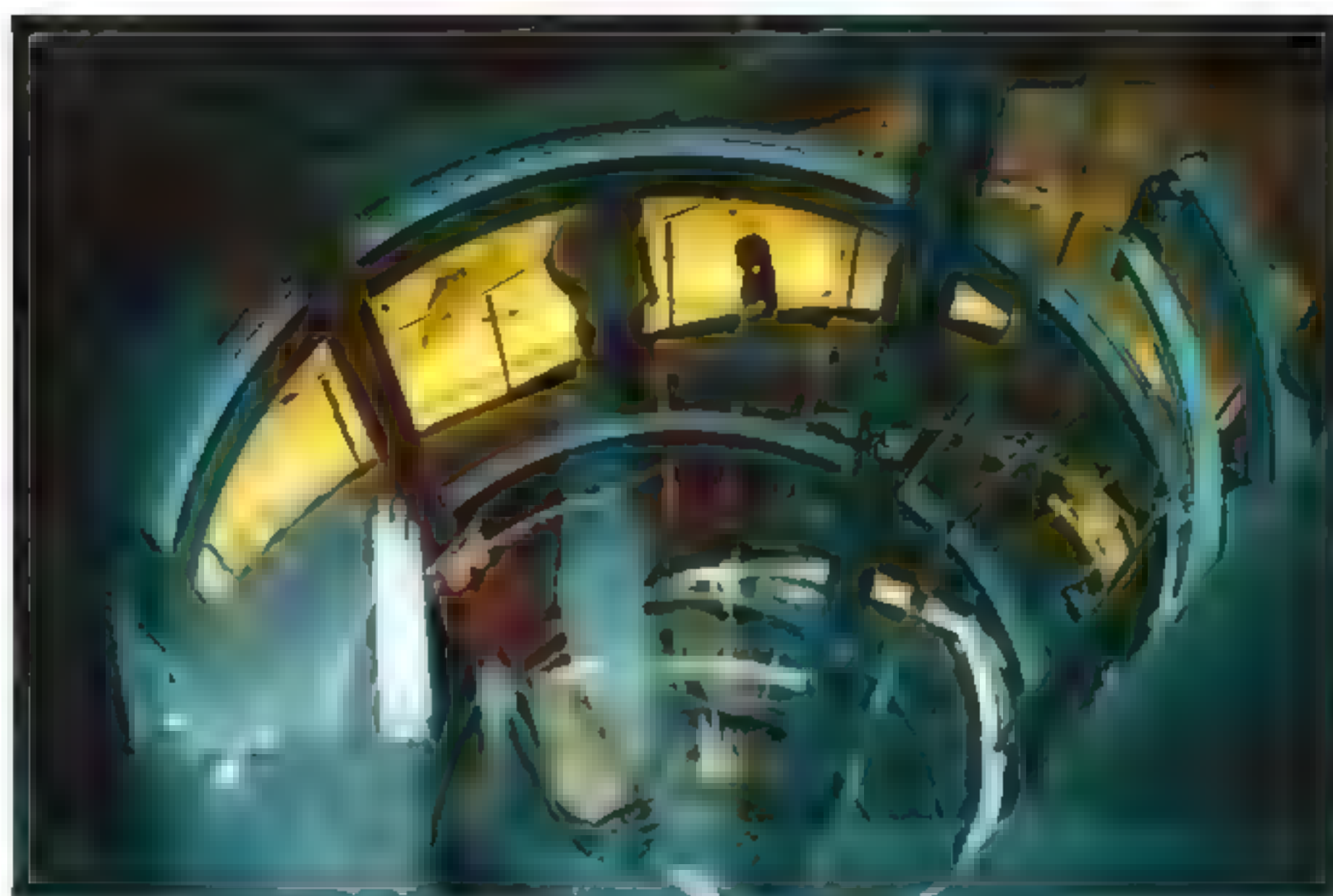


MONA, designed by Nonda Katsalidis of Melbourne-based architects Fender Katsalidis, initially looks like the kind of hidden fortress you might find in an Akira Kurosawa film. Indeed, the museum's treasures are buried in 9,500sq m viewing spaces three-storeys deep in the Triassic Tasmanian rock, offering the jumble of exhibits (they're neither arranged chronologically nor absolutely thematically) as if it had been revealed by some archaeological dig – albeit one kept unbelievably clean and equipped with dramatic lighting. Willy Wonka's glass elevator and top-of-the-range environmental controls – waiting to be ordered and interpreted by some cultural historian. And that would be you and me.

So what are we to make of all this stuff? If it wasn't already obvious, that question is articulated rather loudly by the fact that MONA has no labels. But helpfully, it does provide a sleek-looking device called 'the O' – a sort of iPod, operating by GPS and offering everything from basic information about the works to 'Art Wank' (the institution's term for what others might broadly frame as art history), the odd artist interview and some personal notes from Walsh himself – sometimes a story about his encounter with the work, sometimes biographical stories that more or less relate to it. All of which is a neat way of setting up potential terms of engagement with the museum. The items exist as more-or-less simple material objects, as records of certain moments in history, as attempts to communicate their makers' meditations and as a collection of items that might possibly equate to the biography – via its expression of particular tastes and interests – of a man called Walsh.

It's clear that my host delights in being controversial: indeed it would be fair to say that he holds as true the Oscar Wilde maxim that 'the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about'. *Monanism*, as MONA's inaugural exhibition is titled, is a term derived from the actions of a minor biblical character who became infamous for wasting his seed. It's presumably not just because he likes the colours that Walsh owns Chris Ofili's *Holy Virgin Mary* (1996), the work that was famously removed from the Brooklyn Museum's iteration of Charles Saatchi's *Sensation* show. And he's very pleased with *Locus Focus* (2010), an installation by Austrian collective Gelitin that allows you to admire your excretions as you sit on one of the museum's toilets. Indeed, given that Walsh also owns one of Belgian artist Wim Delvoye's *Cloaca* machines – which mimic the digestive process to turn food into shit – there's a positive affluence of effluent on show here. But as my plane buddy suggested, if you want to be talked about and you choose to live near Hobart, you really do have to make an effort. And not just the AUS\$180 million of effort that the museum and the art it houses reportedly cost Walsh. Even when there is no controversy, Walsh and his team set out to make one. The catalogue entry for Candice Breitz's video installation *Queen (A Portrait of Madonna)* (2005) lacks the customary image because the artist refused to grant the museum permission to use it. The artist, we're told, hated the catalogue entry: 'Madonna fans, separately filmed, sing unaccompanied the entire *Immaculate Collection*. It's the funniest creepiest thing.' As with much of the *Monanism* catalogue, the end result is that it's not the work that's in focus at all.

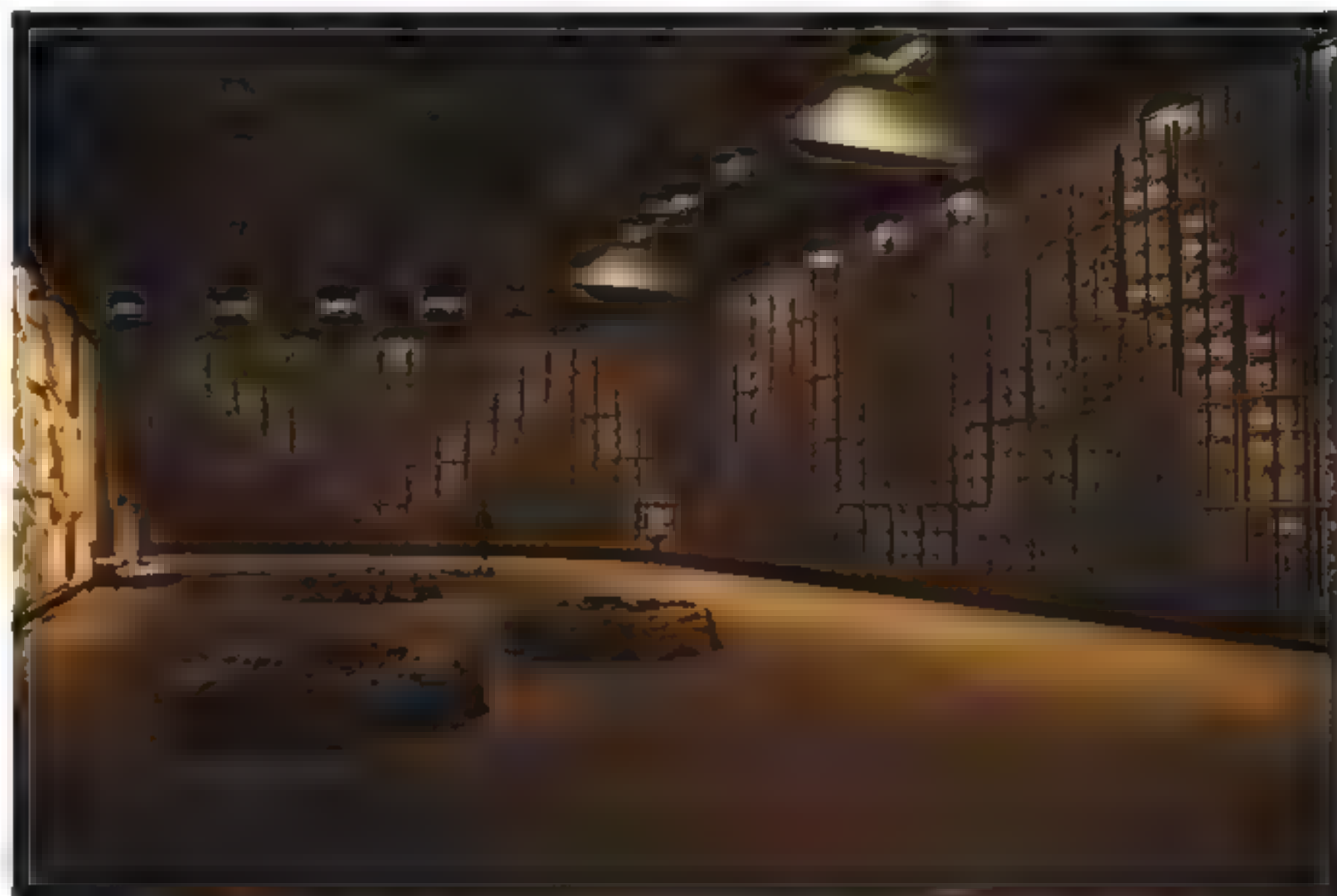
So what is? Well, here's how the local press treated the museum's gala opening. 'Not One Complaint', squawked the *Sunday Tasmanian's* front page over a picture of people queuing to get their first glimpse of MONA. Below that, a larger headline pimped an 'exclusive', complaining about how the state bureaucrats were busy bugging up Tasmania's chances of getting its own Australian-rules football franchise. All of which, I guess, tells us something about the way things in Tasmania generally go. Meanwhile, the front cover of the altogether more excitable *Mercury* (The Voice of Tasmania) boomed 'The Art of Shock' as it documented – across its first five pages – the night's festivities. The



MONA's circular elevator shaft



Patricia Kollar, *My head of St Beatrice*, 2008-10, mixed media, dimensions variable



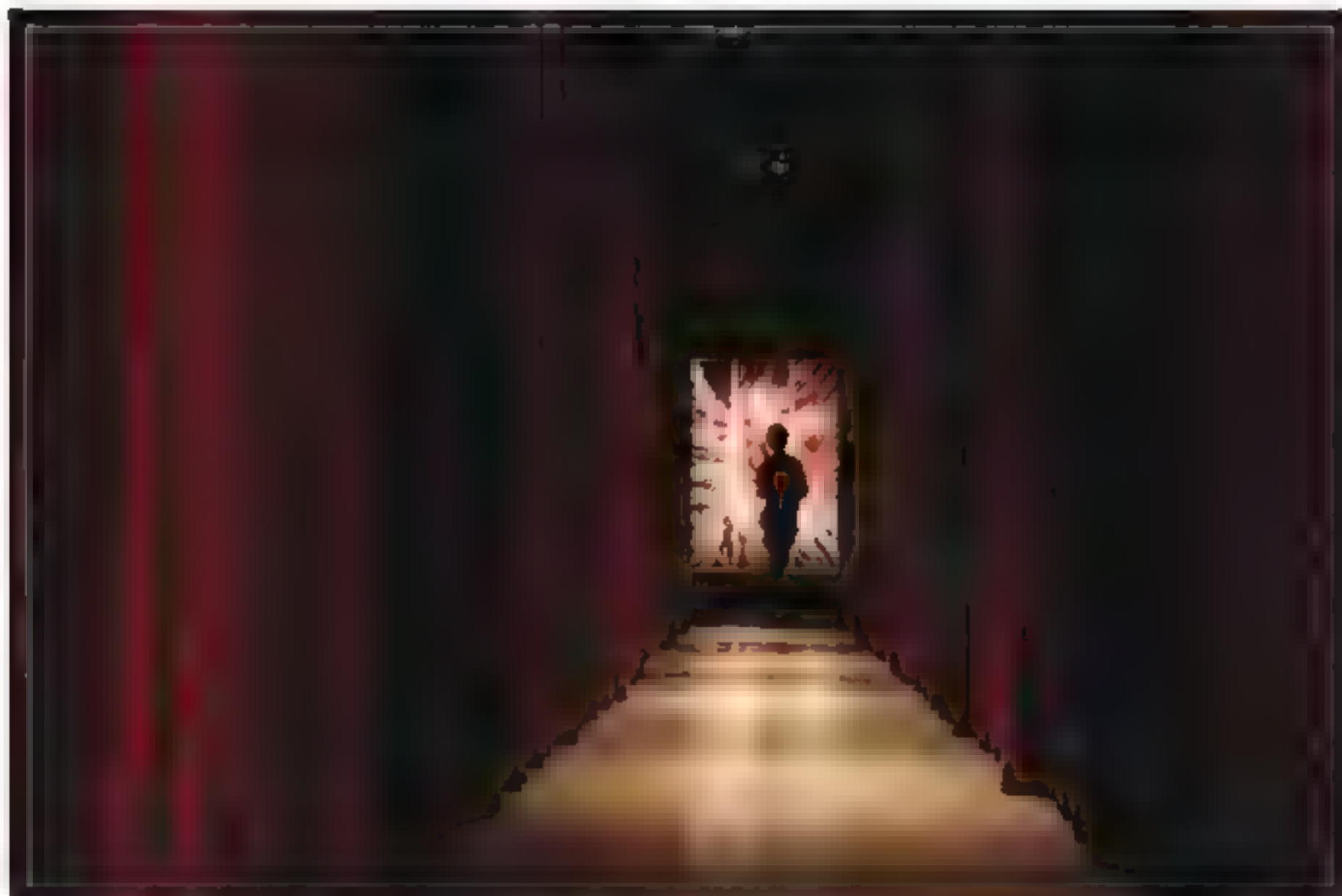
Sidney Nolan, *Snake*, 1970-2, mixed media on paper, 1,610 sheets, 560 x 4428 cm



The museum's entrance



Travis Popp, *But Edna*, 2016-17, computer, electronic devices, pump, 12 magnetic vials, stainless steel basin, water, dimensions variable, edition 2 of 4



Mat Collishaw, *Bullet Hole*, 1988-91, Cibachrome mounted on 15 lightboxes

newspaper could barely contain its delight at the display of 'devices that make excrement, cattle carcasses and a collection of sculptures of human vaginas', although it has to be said that the paper rather let the state down with this summary: 'While there were no A-list celebrities in sight, it was a who's who of eminent Tasmanian personalities'. Perhaps they'd been overheated by FOMA – the annual music festival that Walsh funds and which took place the week before he unleashed MONA on the world. Nick Cave's *Grinderman* had been headlining the night before.

Despite what you've just read, if sex and death are themes most people prefer to explore in the privacy of their own double-bolted bedrooms, then Walsh is no exception. He's built one, in the midst of a three-room apartment in the middle of the museum. Apparently it's a secret, but in true Walsh style, someone made sure that every newspaper knew about it. Walking around the opening in a handpainted frock coat, he cultivates a certain mystique; part ringmaster, part clown, but definitely a man who can pull a circus around him. Catalogues signed by Walsh were going for AUS\$300 in the gift shop, and an urn containing the ashes of his father features as an exhibit. There's no doubt that a large part of what it's about is Walsh. So perhaps it's time to hear from the man himself.

...?

While I'm trying to be subversive and be unlike all other museums, I had a moment of connection, which was quite odd: people coming in, people at the coffee shop, people buying bullshit at the gift shop – all that sort of crap. And just thinking, well, you know, we have the Lego pieces of a real museum, but we've put them together a bit wonky.

Surely it's only as wonky as you are?

No. I've had time to think about the wonkiness and maximise the wonkiality. Hopefully I'm not that askew.

Is there a difference between the art you collected before you had the idea of having a museum and the stuff you've collected after?

Unfortunately the answer is yes. Beyond just art, I go to museums and find myself looking at the air-conditioning ducts. I want to get back to reality, but I don't know if I can. In relation to the art, I find myself thinking about if I could place it, what I could do with it – so playing a curatorial game that I would, if I were being dishonest, claim to abhor.

What about all the video art?

The total myth of video art – that they can say 'we're only going to produce six of these patches of electrons', even though they're perfectly duplicatable – I find very hard to understand. How have I been subverted to believe in such a ridiculous process? But in relation to a museum, you're effectively purchasing permission to show it to the public, so video art makes more sense, whereas other media makes less sense...

Do you feel a responsibility now you've got a museum? Because for some people this is going to form part of their education in art.

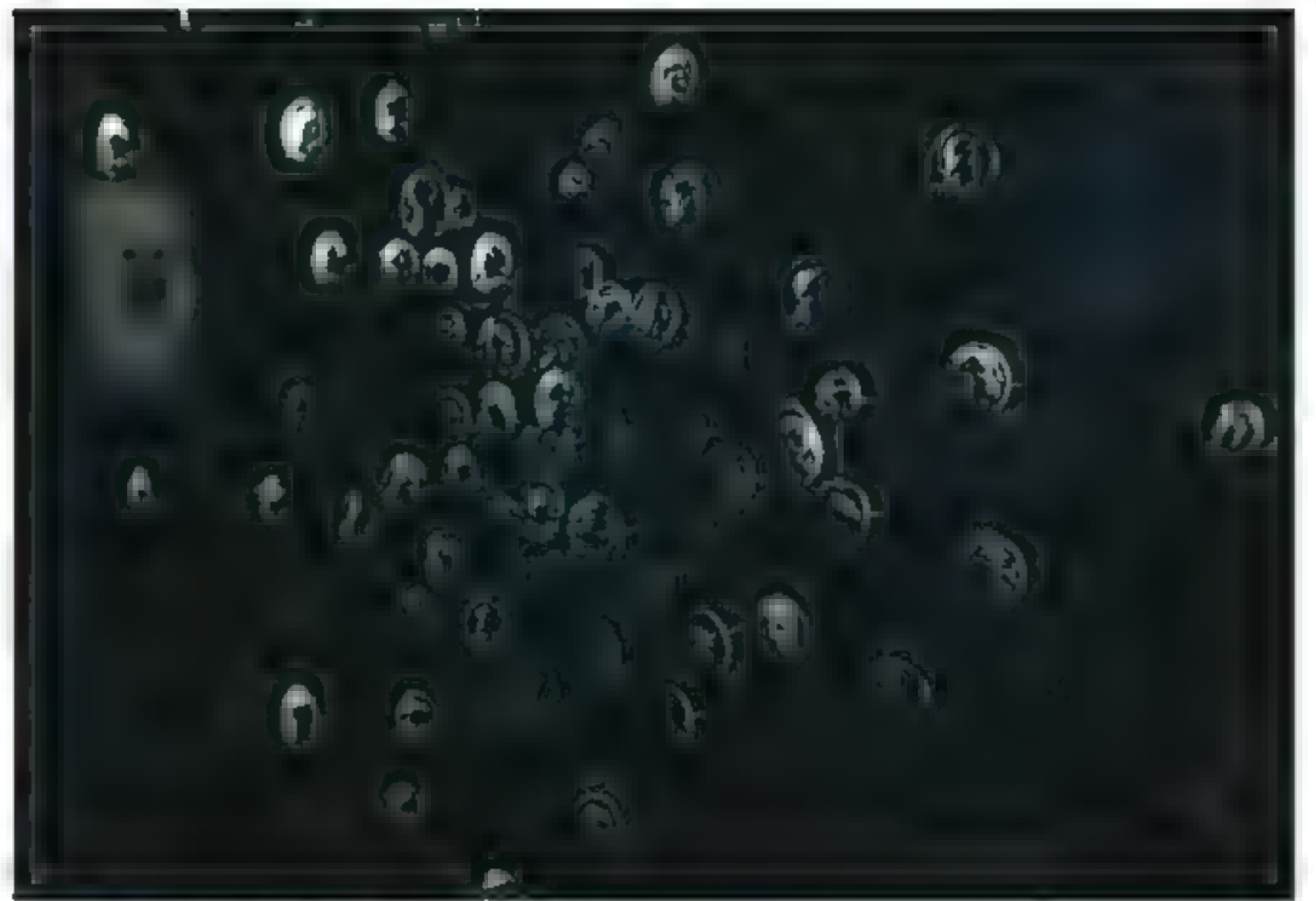
If I drive people to become artists, that would be a terrible thing, because there are a lot more artists struggling for a meal than there are accountants, for example. In 20 years there will be world-class artists who became interested in art because of MONA, nonetheless I hope that I still answer no. Because I'll have probably created a lot of bad ones or at least a lot of good ones that didn't become successful. It's a way of creating tough lives: artists, art and music enrich a culture, but individually they struggle. So the group effect is attractive, but the individual effect is a counterpoint.

Is there anything in your collection that you regret buying?

There's one absolute atrocity – I mean, I must have liked it at some point, but when they put it up, I just could not believe how ugly and bereft of merit it was.



MONA bar



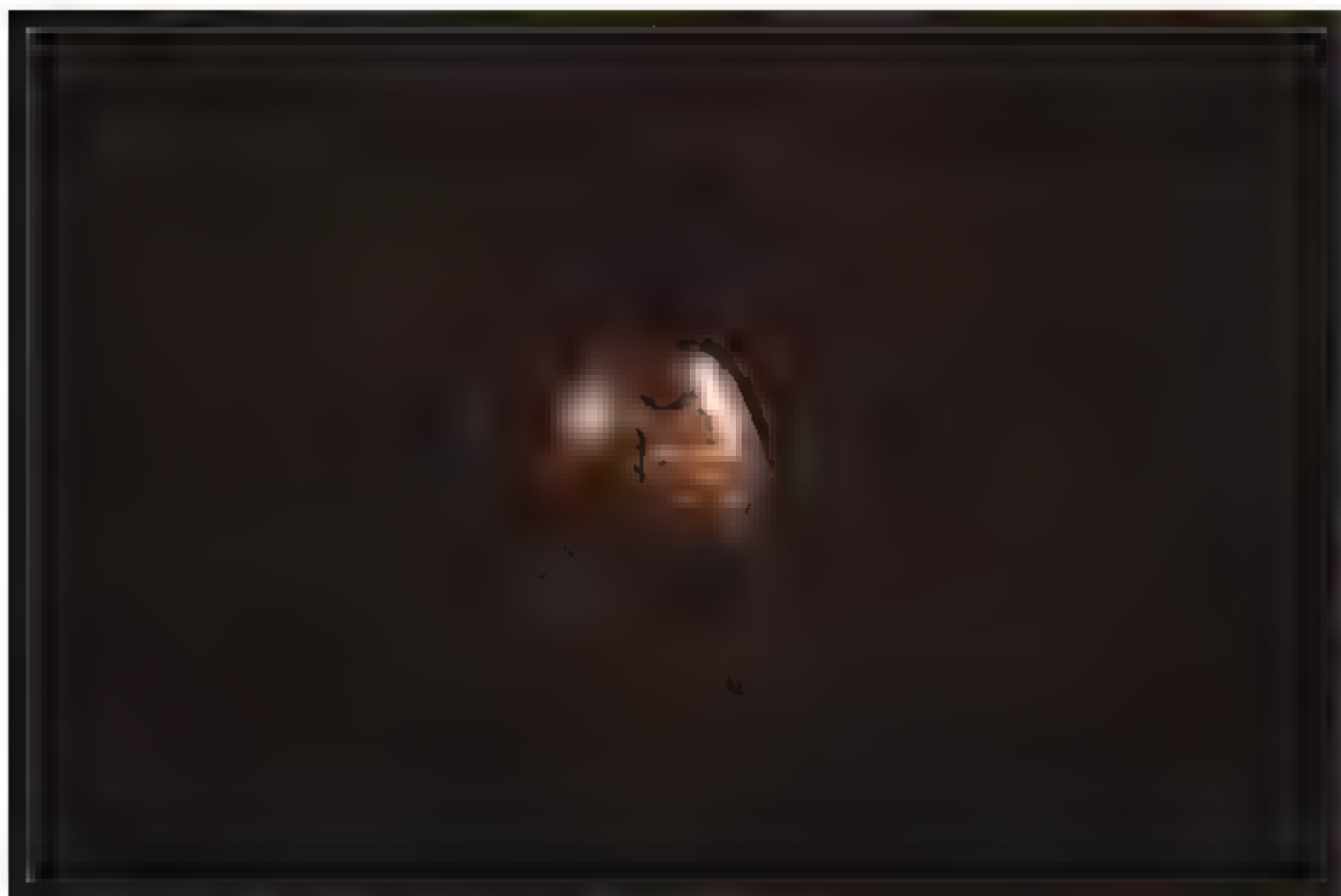
Coins from the museum's collection



MONA exterior



Stephen Parbrook, *On the Road to Heaven the Highway to Hell*, 2008, dark chocolate, 24 x 14 x 14 cm, edition 2 of 5



Jrn containing the ashes of David Walsh's father



MONA exterior



MONA campus

Wim Delvoye, *Cloaca Professional*, 2010, mixed media installation, dimensions variable

Museum approach

Does that happen often?

It's happened a few times.

So what do you look for in a work of art?

I like parsimony; I like it to be as simple as it possibly can be. I like it to express whatever it is that's enclosed within it, and sometimes I like it to be flagrantly breaking that rule. I'm a bit Marshall McLuhan about it: a painting could be about anything, but some media are tailored to particular ideas.

Does the character of an artist matter to you? I mean, if you met an artist and absolutely hated them, would that carry through to your ideas about their work?

That has happened. There are two categories here: there are artists that are absolutely annoying but who still make great work and I'd probably buy it; but there are also, and it happens quite often, artists who I meet and find that their work lacks the depth and interest that I thought it had because they are vacuous tossers. I used to read poets and occasionally used to listen to poets reading poetry, and it often undermined my experience. There's every reason if you're a famous person to be a damaged person. One is that you've been driven all your life and you've been thinking, *I'm a genius, I'm a genius, I'm a genius*. And then someone tells you you're a genius, so you start to believe the myth. And the other one is you're pampered – if you're a bloke, beautiful girls want to jump you and everything starts to go right in your life, so you start to think you've got a right to expect that. So success and this notion of genius and the ability to believe in yourself actually undermines you, it actually makes you less likely to be a pleasant human being.

Did the museum come out exactly as you expected it to?

I honestly have to say that having got to this point, it's much better than I would have thought. It's like when I write; I'm no great writer, but when I read someone who's a really good writer – a lot better than me, a million times better than me, like Nabokov – I'm absolutely flabbergasted that it's possible. I immediately think about genius. When I write myself, I write a lot better than I think. So there is a process that you go through to get what you want to come out. I'm sure that's the case with him. There's no such thing as genius – some of these artists capture ideas that they're not even capable of thinking. That's fine with me, but I don't want to deify artists or things... And if I can figure out a way of making money out of all of this – and I honestly believe I can – then...

Do you see MONA as a business, then?

Not in the way that people think of business. Businesses have business plans: here's how we're going to make money. But that sort of thing annoys me – that's like marketing, and I hate marketers. What I want to do is simply build what I want, get it to be as interesting as it can be, to the point where it makes me happy, and then figure out if I might be able to make a few bucks out of it. If it turns out to be nothing, so be it.

So that's it, then. MONA – take it or leave it. But perhaps that's exactly why it will be a success. That it gives you the feeling that anything goes (OK – as long as you've got the money). In a way, all the paths Walsh and 'the O' might offer through the museum are just so much bullshit, so much crap. The only way to really find your way through it is to turn the device off, block your ears, stop reading articles like this one, cast off the burden of civilisation, go primitive and make up your own narrative. Oh, dear. Now I'm sounding like David Walsh.☺

Monanism is on view at the Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, until 19 July

Listings *Museums and Galleries*

UNITED KINGDOM, LONDON

ARCADIA MISSA GALLERY

Unit 6 Bellenden Business Centre
Bellenden Road, Peckham
London SE15 4RF
Supralimen Totem Project
26 Mar - 14 Apr

BLOOMBERG SPACE

50 Finsbury Square
London EC2A 1HD
T +44 (0)20 7330 7959
www.bloombergspace.com
gallery @ bloomberg.net
6 April - 14 May 2011

CALVERT 22

Calvert 22 Foundation
22 Calvert Avenue
London E2 7JP
T +44 (0)207 613 2141
info @ calvert22.org
Practise For Everyday Life- Young Artists from Russia
23 Mar - 29 May

CORVI MORA

1A Kempsford Road
London SE11 4NU
T +44 (0)20 7840 9111
www.corvi-mora.com
Lynette Yiadom-Boakye
"Notes and Letters"
to 28 April, 2011

DAVID ROBERTS ART FOUNDATION

111 Great Titchfield Street
London W1W 6RY
T +44 (0)20 7637 0868
www.davidrobertsartfoundation.com
Curators' Series #4. Studies for an Exhibition
7 Apr - 11 Jun

FOCAL POINT GALLERY

Southend Central Library
Victoria Avenue,
Southend on Sea,
Essex SS2 6LX
T +44 (0)1702 534 108
www.focalpoint.org.uk
Orbitecture II
18 Apr - 11 Jun

FRITH STREET GALLERY

17-18 Golden Square
London W1F 9JJ
T +44 (0)20 7494 1550
info @ frithstreetgallery.com
Dorothy Cross: Stalactite
24 Mar - 5 May

GREENGRASS

1a Kempsford Road
London SE11 4NU
T +44 (0)20 7840 9101
www.greengrassi.com
Silke Otto-Knapp
10 Mar - 30 Apr

IBID

35 Hoxton Square,
London N1 6NN
T +44 (0)20 7998 7902
info @ ibidprojects.com
www.ibidprojects.com
Amir Mogharabi
11 Apr - 14 May

LISSON GALLERY

52-54 Bell Street
London, NW1 5DA
T +44 (0)20 7724 2739
contact @ lissongallery.com
Rashid Rana
30 Mar - 30 Apr

LONDON NEWCASTLE PROJECT SPACE

28 Redchurch Street
London, E2 7DP
T +44 (0)20 7407 9074
admin @ brownseditions.com
Jonathan Ellery
The Human Condition
Sculpture and conceptual book
18-26 Apr

MODERN ART

23/25 Eastcastle Street
London W1W 8DF
T +44 (0)20 7299 7950
info @ modernart.net
www.modernart.net
Linder
15 Apr - 21 May

MOT INTERNATIONAL

Unit 54/5th floor Regents Studios
8 Andrews Road
London E8 4QN
T +44 (0)20 7923 9561
info @ motinternational.com
www.motinternational.org
Laure Prouvost
8 Apr - 21 May

RAVEN ROW

56 Artillery Lane,
London E1 7LS
T +44 (0)20 7377 4300
info @ ravenrow.org
Morgan Fisher
Films And Paintings And In Between And Nearby
to 24 Apr

SEVENTEEN

17 Kingsland Rd
London E2 8AA
www.seventeengallery.com
T + (0)20 7729 5777
Kate Owens: Carriers
13 Apr - 21 May

SIMON OLDFIELD GALLERY

9 Henrietta Street
Covent Garden,
London WC2E 8PW
T +44 (0)7970 719962
www.simonoldfield.com
art @ simonoldfield.com
Jonathan Trayte
24 Mar - 23 Apr

SPRÜTH MAGERS LONDON

7A Grafton Street
London W1S 4EH
Open: Tue - Sat, 10-6
Anthony McCall: Works on paper
to 26 March
Anthony McCall: Vertical Works
presented by Sprüth Magers at
Ambika P3, University of
Westminster
to 27 March

VICTORIA MIRO

16 Wharf Road
London N1 7RW
T +44 (0)20 7336 8109
Chantall Joffe
19 Mar - 21 Apr

VILMA GOLD GALLERY

6 Minerva Street,
London E2 9EH
T +44 (0)20 7729 9888
mail @ vilmagold.com
www.vilmagold.com
Charles Atlas: (/ + \)
to 10 April

WAPPING PROJECT

Wapping Hydraulic Power
Station, Wapping Wall,
E1W 3SG
T +44 (0)20 7981 9851
YOIJI'S WOMEN
to 14 May

176 GALLERY

176 Prince of Wales Road
London NW5 3PT
www.zabludowiczcollection.com
info @ zabludowiczcollection.com
The Shape We're In
(3 Locations)
10 Mar - 12 Jun

UNITED KINGDOM

ARNOLFINI

16 Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA
T +44 (0)117 917 2315
www.arnolfini.org.uk
Cosima Von Bonin: Bone Idle
to 25 April

DUNDEE CONTEMPORARY

152 Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4DY
www.dca.org.uk
T +44 (0)1382 909 900
Manfred Pernice: déjàVu
5 Mar - 8 May

GALLERY OF MODERN ART

Royal Exchange Square,
Glasgow G1 3AH
T +44 (0)141 287 3050
museums @ glasgowlife.org.uk
www.glasgow.gov.uk
Unsettled Objects
throughout 2011

GRAND UNION

Unit 19, Minerva Works
Fazeley Street, Digbeth
Birmingham B5 5RS
www.wearceastside.org
info @ grand-union.org.uk
Search Engine: Live Acts & Sound
21 Mar - 30 Apr

MODERN ART OXFORD

30 Pembroke Street,
Oxford OX1 1BP
T +44 (0)1865 722 733
www.modernartoxford.org.uk
Michael Sailstorfer: Clouds
to 22 May

ORMEAU BATHS GALLERY

18a Ormeau Avenue
Belfast, BT2 8HS
www.ormeaubaths.co.uk
mail @ ormeaubaths.co.uk
Into The Black
Neil Shawcross and Charles Walsh
21 April - 20 May

KERLIN GALLERY

Anne's Lane, South Anne Street
Dublin 2, Ireland
T +3531 670 9093
gallery @ kerlin.ie
www.kerlin.ie
Brian Maguire
8 Apr - 14 May

LISMORE CASTLE ARTS

Lismore, Co. Waterford
Ireland
T +353 (0)58 54061
info @ lismorecastlearts.ie
Still Life
9 Apr - 30 Sep

SPACE X GALLERY

45 Preston Street,
Exeter EX1 1DP
T +44 (0)1392 431786
mail@spacex.org.uk
Tim Ellis
to 30 Apr

**TURNER CONTEMPORARY
RENDEZVOUS**

Margate, Kent CT9 1HG
T +44 (0)1843 233 000
info@turnercontemporary.org
www.turnercontemporary.org
Revealed: Turner Contemporary
16 Apr - 4 Sep

UNITED STATES**DOOSAN GALLERY**

533 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10001
newyork@doosangallery.com
Open Tue-Sat 10-6
The Pig That Therefore I Am:
Miru Kim
24 Mar - 23 Apr

LEHMANN MAUPIN

540 West 26 St
New York, NY 10001
Open Tues-Sat 10-6
T +1(212)255 2923
info@lehmannmaupin.com
www.lehmannmaupin.com
Tim Rollins and K.O.S
to 30 April

LEHMANN MAUPIN

201 Chrystie St
New York, NY 10002
Open Tues-Sat 11-6, Sun 12-6
T +1(212)254 0054
info@lehmannmaupin.com
www.lehmannmaupin.com
Angel Otero
to 17 April

L.A. LOUVER

45 North Venice Boulevard,
Venice, California 90291
T +1 (310) 822 4955
Open Tue - Sat: 10-6
Mon: by appointment
info@lalouver.com
www.lalouver.com
Terry Allen Ghost Ship Rodez The
Momo Chronicles
Rebecca Campbell Romancing the
Apocalypse
Joel Shapiro Courtyard &
Skyroom
to 16 Apr

MICHAEL WERNER GALLERY

4 East 77th Street, New York,
NY 10075
T +1 212 988 1623
Mon-Sat 10-6
info@michaelwerner.com
www.michaelwerner.com
From Barefoot Prophet to Avant-
Garde Artist - Friedrich Schröder-
Sonnenstern
to 30 Apr

THE PACE GALLERY

32 East 57th Street, NY
T +1 (212) 421 3292
Tues-Frid 9-30 / Sat 10-6
www.thepacegallery.com
Robert Mangold: Ring Paintings
to 23 April
Willem de Kooning: The Figure:
Movement and Gesture
29 April to 29 July

THE PACE GALLERY

534 West 25th Street, NY
T +1 (212) 929-7000
Tues - Sat 10 - 6
Elizabeth Murray:
Painting in the '70s
to 30 April

THE PACE GALLERY

545 West 22nd Street, NY
T +1 (212) 989 4258
Tues-Sat 10-6
Tara Donovan:
Untitled (Mylar), 2011
to 9 April

THE PACE GALLERY

510 West 25th Street, NY
T +1 (212) 255.4044
Tues-Sat 10-6
info2@thepacegallery.com
www.thepacegallery.com
James Siena
to 30 Apr

AUSTRIA**CHRISTINE KOENIG GALLERY**

Schleifmühlgasse 1A
A-1040 VIENNA
office@christinekoeniggalerie.at
www.christinekoeniggalerie.com
T +43 1 585 74 74
TEX RUBINOWITZ
BEND IT
to 30 April 2011

GALERIE GRITA INSAM

An der Hulben 3 / Seilerstätte
1010 Vienna
T +43 1 521 5330
www.galeriegritainsam.at
office@galeriegritainsam.at
Manuel Knapp to 30 Apr

GALERIE HUBERT WINTER

Breite Gasse 17
A-1070 Wien
T +43 (0)1524 09 76
www.galeriewinter.at
Proposals, Encryptions and
the Death of a Typology
(Architecturally Speaking)
by Mary Ellen Carroll
to 7 May

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

Mirabellplatz 2,
5020 Salzburg
T +43 662 881 393
www.ropac.net
Terence Koh/Tony Cragg, Lee Ufan
14 Apr through May

GENERALI FOUNDATION

Wiedner Hauptstrasse 15
Foundationsquartier
1040 Vienna, Austria
T +43 1 504 98 80
F +43 1 504 98 83
foundation@generali.at
www.foundation.generali.at
unExhibit
4 Feb - 17 Jul

SECESSION

Friedrichstraße 12,
A-1010 Vienna
T +43 1 587 53 07
www.secession.at
office@secession.at
Ines Lombardi
to May 15

BELGIUM**ARGOS**

Werfstraat 13, rue du Chantier
1000 Brussels
T +32 2 229 00 03
www.argosarts.be
Hans Op de Beeck
to 2 Apr

CHARLES DE JONGHE

Rue du Mail 21
Brussels 1050
T +32 2 537 87 03
www.charlesdejonghe.com
Michael Conrads, Roman
Schramm, Malte Urbach
24 Mar - 7 May

GALERIE ALMINE RECH

20 Rue de l'Abbaye
B-1050 Brussels
T +32 26 485 684
www.alminerech.com
Johannes Wohnseiffer/Tom Burr
4 Apr - 12 May

**GALERIE BARONIAN-
FRANCEY**

2 rue Isidore Verheyden
1050 Brussels
T +32-25 12 92 95
www.baronianfrancey.com
Bruno Serralongue
to Apr 23

**GALERIE RODOLPHE
JANSSEN**

35, rue de Livourne
1050 Brussels
T +32 2538 08 18
www.galerierodolphejanssen.com
Thomas Leroy
2 Apr - 14 May

TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY

Verlatstraat 23-25
2000 Antwerp
T +32 (0)3 257 14 17
www.timvanlaeregalerie.com
Paula Mueller
to 7 May

XAVIER HUFKENS

Rue Saint-Georges 6 - 8
1050 Brussels
T +32 2 6396730
www.xavierhufkens.com
Sterling Ruby to 9 Apr

ZENO X GALLERY

Leopold De Waelplaats 16
B-2000 Antwerp
T +32 3 216 16 26
www.zeno-x.com
Jack Whitten
to 7 May

DENMARK**BO BJERGGAARD**

Flæsketorvet 85A,
DK-1711 Copenhagen V,
T +45 33 93 42 21
Tue-Fri 1-6, Sat 12-4
Bjerggaard.com
Bjerggaard@bjerggaard.com
Ivan Andersen - Tabte horisonter
og forgotten masterpieces
to 15 Apr
Erwin Wurm
to 26 Jun

GALLERI NICOLAI WALLNER

Ny Carlsberg Vej 68 OG
1760 Copenhagen
T +45 32 57 09 70
www.nicolaiwallner.com
David Shrigley - new works - solo
exhibition 8 Apr - 21 May
Jakob Kolding - new works - solo
exhibition 8 Apr - 21 May

FINLAND

KIASMA MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Mannerheiminaukio 2,
Helsinki, Finland
www.kiasma.fi
ARSH
15 Apr - 27 Nov

FRANCE

BEAUX ARTS DE PARIS

L'Ecole nationale Supérieure
13 Quai Malaquai
75006 Paris
www.beauxartsparis.fr
Henri Barande
to 7 May

DOCKS ART FAIR

Lyon
www.docksartfair.com
Sep 2011

GALERIE ALMINE RECH

19, rue de Saintonge
75003 Paris
T +33 1 45 83 71 90
www.galeriealminerech.com
Gregor Hildebrandt
Gabriel Vormstein
1 Apr - 14 May

GALLERIA CONTINUA

Le Moulin (Paris)
46, rue de la Ferté Gaucher
77169 Boissy-le-Château
Seine-et-Marne
T +33 1 64 20 39 50
www.galleriacontinua.com
"Sphères 3"
to 11 Jun

GALERIE EMMANUEL PERROTIN

76, rue de Turenne & 10 Impasse
St Claude, 75003 Paris
T +33 1 42 16 79 79
www.galerieperrotin.com
Bernard Frize/Daniel Firman
to Apr 30

GALERIE LAURENT GODIN

5 Rue du Grenier Saint Lazare
75003 Paris
T +33 1 42 71 10 66
www.laurentgodin.com
Gerard Traquandi to 7 May

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

7, rue Debelleye 75003 Paris
T +33 1 42 72 99 00
www.ropac.net
Robert Longo
to 23 Apr

MYRVOLD > MYWORLD PIA MYRVOLD

15 rue Sambre et Meuse
75010 Paris
T +33 607 968 552
www.pia-myrvold.com

GERMANY

DEUTSCHE GUGGENHEIM

Unter den Linden 13/15
10117 Berlin
T +49 (0)30 20 20 93
www.deutsche-guggenheim.de
*Deutsche Bank presents the "Artist
of the Year" 2011*
Yto Barrada: Riffs
15 Apr - 19 Jun

SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN

Oranienburger Straße 18
D-10178 Berlin, Germany
www.spruethmagers.com
Open Tue - Sat, 11-6
*Sterling Ruby: I am not free
because I can be exploded at any
time. Selections: Morris, Trockel,
Holzer + Pink (Curated by Sterling
Ruby)*
8 April - 28 May

VW (VENEKLASEN/WERNER)

Rudi-Dutschke-Str. 26,
10969 Berlin, Germany
T +49 30 81 61 60 418
info@vwberlin.com
www.vwberlin.com
Open Mon - Fri 10-6, Sat 11-6
*Neil Campbell, Paul Sharits, Ryan
Sullivan, Jeffrey Wells* to 22 Apr
*Secondary Evidence of Things
Unseen* to 23 April
Meredith Sparks, Exhibition
Opening 29 April

GREECE

FRISSIRAS MUSEUM

3 Monis Asteriou
Plaka, Athens
T +30 2103 234678 or
+30 2103 316027
www.frissirasmuseum.com

HOLLAND

MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN

museumpark 18-20
3015 CX Rotterdam
The Netherlands
*Gabriel Lester: Suspension of
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Modern British Sculpture

Royal Academy of Arts, London

22 January–7 April

Modern British Sculpture is an unusual show. Most critics have been baffled by its apparent failure to live up to their expectation that this was to be a 'big survey show', of the kind that would propose a rich historical vista of British sculpture in the last century. Instead, what we get is an oddly compressed sequence of historical episodes and juxtapositions that seem to operate as flashed illuminations of an elaborate thesis which is only articulated in the show's massive catalogue.

Modern British Sculpture is cocurated by Penelope Curtis (recently curator of the Henry Moore Institute, now director of Tate Britain) and sculptor Keith Wilson (who cocurated the institute's 2002 *The Object Sculpture*). The pair's idiosyncratic mission seems to be to replay the history of twentieth-century sculpture in Britain to defend 'Britishness' against the claim that 'Modernism' was always something that the British did far too late, meanwhile this unparochial Britishness becomes the backdrop to a lament for the breakdown of something called 'sculpture' that is supposed to have happened somewhere around the end of the 1960s, with the ascendancy of American Minimalism.

This is no conventional, impartial, one-thing-after-another chronology, then, but an opinionated, speculative rethinking of the cultural history of sculpture in the UK. The show starts with a three-quarter-size model of Edwin Lutyen's 1919–20 London Cenotaph, immediately proposing sculpture's memorialising and public function, while embedding the national-identity theme. It also frames the show's preoccupation with the 'long twentieth century', a notion which allows the sculptural academicism of the late-Victorian era to dovetail with the ethnographically inspired primitivism of Edwardian early modernists: a faux-museological room contrasts ancient artefacts from the British Museum with works by artists such as Eric Gill and Jacob Epstein. Epstein's hysterically virile and massive *Adam* (1938–9) steals the first half of the show, yet his sweaty, pagan, un-English eroticism can't stop us from being led inexorably to the tediously buttoned-up midcentury triumph of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, sculptors who blended primitivism, classicism and European geometric rationalism, while managing to bleach most of the energy out of all three.

But at this point the show hits the gas, as if postwar modernity was a sort of car crash you try not to stare at by accelerating past it. A room for Richard Hamilton and Victor Pasmore's intriguing, exploded installation of hanging panels *An Exhibit* (1957) momentarily presages both installation art and institutional critique, calling into question the monumentalist, humanistic aspirations of the earlier artists, while dismissing traditional 'sculptural' concerns – modelling, form, mimesis, gesture.

Yet after this unusual aside, it's with Anthony Caro's 1962 formalist masterpiece, *Early One Morning*, that the show's 'end of sculpture' melancholia is announced – 'marking the glorious end of an enquiry rather than the beginning it has been taken for', according to the caption. After this, the show piles up three decades into as many rooms, from British antiformalism by the likes of Barry Flanagan to the postmodern emptiness of Julian Opie, while wagging a finger about 'foreign influences'. Look! Richard Long's *Chalk Line* (1984) next to Carl Andre's *Equivalent VIII* (1966)! Damien Hirst's fly-infested vitrine *Let's Eat Outdoors Today* (1990–1) next to Jeff Koons's *One Ball 50/50 Tank* (1985)! Those damn Yanks!

Modern British Sculpture's real problem is that it cannot wear its somewhat confused conservatism proudly on its sleeve. It seems intent on rehabilitating a reduced, dehistoricised notion of Britishness on one hand, while attempting to suggest that modern British 'sculpture' could have gone another way than it did after 1970. But in a way, that the show should be so inscrutable to the public is understandable, given that these are subterranean ideological manoeuvres that are not really meant for our public consideration. These are the secret narratives of the insider art establishment – of organisations like the Henry Moore Institute, intent on artificially perpetuating a cultural discourse of the 'sculptural' beyond its useful life; and of institutions like Tate – or the Royal Academy – stubbornly searching for a way to remodel a narrative of national identity through the past, at a time when Britishness seems so impossible to define in the present...

J.J. Charlesworth

Henry Moore, *Reclining Figure*, 1951, bronze, 116 x 245 x 88 cm, Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, presented by the Arts Council of Great Britain through the Scottish Arts Council 1969. Installed at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2011. Photo: Ionn Bodkin Dawkins/Colour. Reproduced by permission of the Henry Moore Foundation, Perry Green. Courtesy Royal Academy of Arts, London.

It's over. In the four 16mm films that comprise Ben Rivers's *Slow Action* (2010), some kind of apocalypse has transpired, sea levels have risen dramatically and human society is scattered on disparate isles and atolls, where it evolves discretely at weird tangents. In pseudo-ethnographic fashion, Rivers's camera roams four of these in turn; though in actuality, following the example of Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962) and, particularly, Werner Herzog's *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005), he's filming real places as they are today and layering a fictional voiceover on top. The first segment is shot on the blasted volcanic landscape of Lanzarote. Here, we're told, it's incredibly hot: after sunset, the place comes alive with people who live according to reason and logic. (Reflecting this, animated geometries appear in the sky.) They court each other, we're told, by means of equations. It's the land of the left-brained.

The next island – actually one of the Polynesian isles of Tuvalu – is tropical, scattered with wreckage and prowled by wild boar. The typical mode of death among its inhabitants is suicide, and generally it looks like the kind of rancid utopia Tacita Dean might be found photographing. Indeed, utopic thought – either dashed on the rocks or unpredictably mutated – is the organising principle of the whole series. The third island, Gunkanjima, a burned-out mining colony off the coast of Nagasaki, is covered with deserted and hideous industrial buildings. We're told that this was, indeed, one castaway's "anti-human utopia"; this was his idea of perfection. Utopia, Rivers's voiceover muses philosophically, is by definition no-place: it can only be approached, never reached.

In 'Somerset', the final zone (the actual location unidentified; Rivers, making a joke with himself, is from Somerset, England), jungle-dwelling figures stand for the camera, wearing nightmarish rudimentary masks. These people, we're told, are zealously political and in a constant state of revolution. By this point, the islands are divergent enough that one starts to think of Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972), with its proliferating dream metropolises. And indeed, for all the bravura and intelligence of Rivers's film, that's what hobbles it somewhat: it often remains in the collected shadows of precursors. This is most apparent in the Gunkanjima section, whose footage is hugely similar to that in Carl Michael von Hausswoff and Thomas Nordanstad's film *Hashima* (2002). Not surprisingly, because it was shot on the same inhuman island. A section of the Lanzarote sequence, meanwhile, was set in a cave that's already got a sound installation in it. Having been there, I can confirm that the visitors' café is just out of shot.

In practical terms, then, *Slow Action* reminds us that there's an economy of ruins – with artists scuttling around the globe trying to claim them – and, more generally, an economy of tropes. Here, Rivers can sometimes seem to be shuffling a well-worn set of flashcards: utopia, ruin, fictional documentary, Herzog, metafiction, etc. He's good at it, and resultantly this is the sort of suavely synthetic art that'll clarify a historical moment and the issues at play within it. He's also capable, at points, of a surpassing and eloquent strangeness. The 'Somerset' figures, with their huge primitive masks, really do make one think of a species that's regressed into something barely recognisable. In those moments no other artwork, film or book enters the mind, and Rivers is wholly – and impressively – his own man. *Martin Herbert*

Ben Rivers
Slow Action

Matt's Gallery, London
26 January–20 March

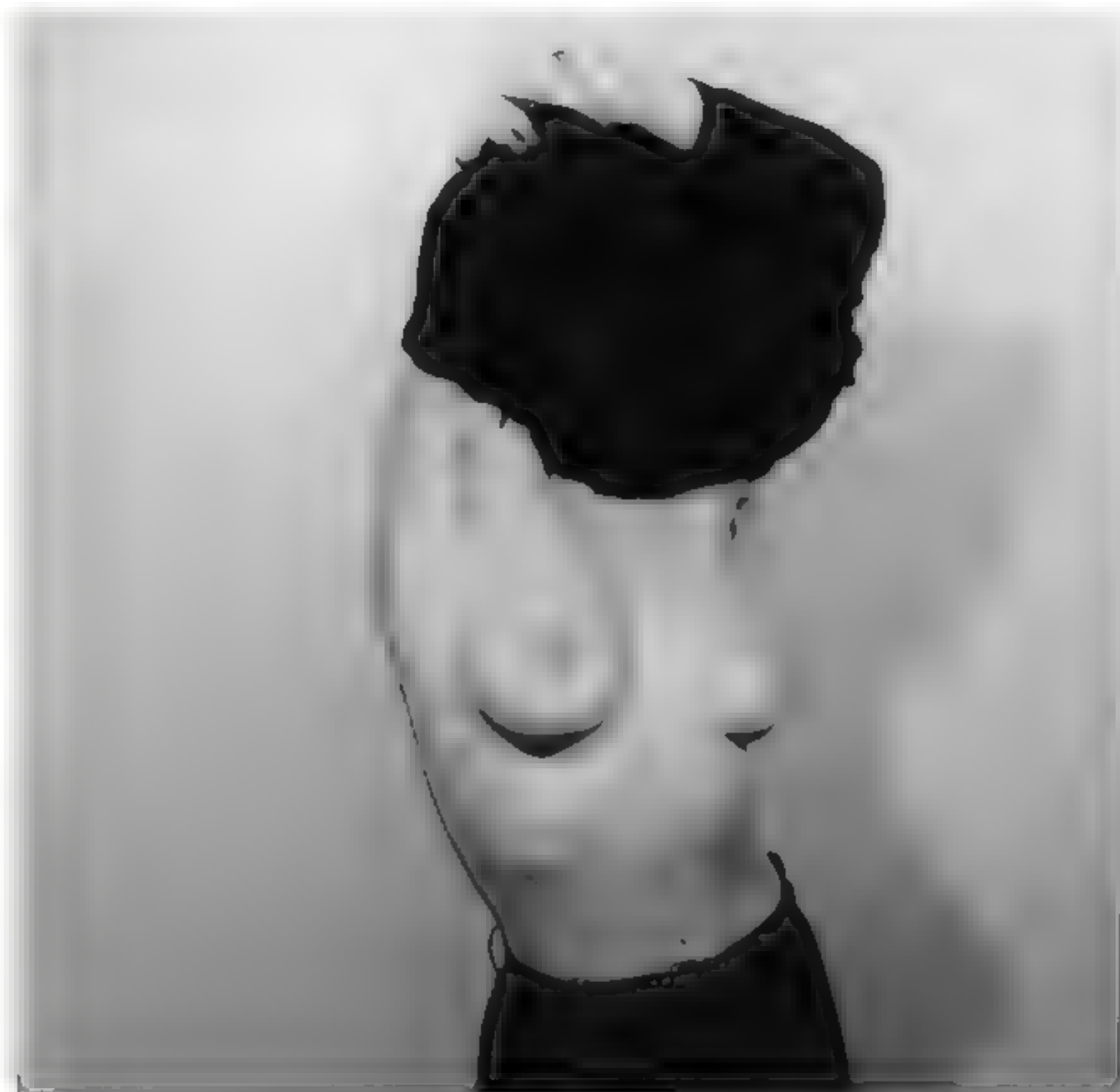


Slow Action, 2010, film still. © and
courtesy the artist

Robert Mapplethorpe: Night Work

Alison Jacques Gallery, London

19 January – 19 March



It's not the first time Robert Mapplethorpe's work has been celebrity-curated – David Hockney, Hedi Slimane and Robert Wilson have all had a go – but the choice of Scissor Sisters is particularly canny. Alison Jacques invites a well-known but still relatively edgy pop group to breathe life into a dead artist's estate (and this gallery has certainly been collecting a few lately) and to glam-up the inauguration of the new space. Meanwhile, Scissor Sisters get to promote their latest album (inspired by Mapplethorpe's photographs, natch), and the cultural kudos of being associated with an artist who's far more iconic than they'll ever be. Their tactic has been to produce a group show that mixes Mapplethorpe's greatest hits and obscure wall-pieces with works by 12 other mainly New York-based artists directly influenced by Mapplethorpe.

There's a fan quality to *Robert Mapplethorpe: Night Work* that makes Mapplethorpe appear more accessible than his usual niche S/M label. The exhibition opens with a BBC documentary from the *Arena* series – an unusual strategy for a commercial gallery, where artworks rarely get an introduction, but presumably important for a pop group sensitive to media image. *Arena* turns out to be gripping, and visitors are finding it difficult to stop watching this unexpectedly earnest-looking artist talking about how his Catholic upbringing influenced his love of symmetry, or the interview with the owner of the world's largest gay bathhouse, whose clientele Mapplethorpe documented in his most darkly erotic portraits.

The Catholic-symmetry idea seems to have been an organising principle for Scissor Sisters too, as Mapplethorpe works are placed next to contemporary artists' works that look remarkably similar to the originals, nearly identical in the case of Dan Fischer and Gillian Wearing. This is very literal curating, but no worse for it, since it underlines Scissor Sisters's argument for Mapplethorpe's continued authority. So, there's an erotic Mapplethorpe flower, *Amaryllis* (1985), next to Matthew Barney's *De Lama Lâmina* (2004), featuring a man metamorphosing into a flower, bulb sprouting from his arse, which in turn hangs next to Mapplethorpe's infamous *Self-Portrait* of 1978, in which he provocatively pulls a whip from his anus.

It's no surprise that Scissor Sisters have found an affinity with Mapplethorpe's meticulous choreography and sense of theatricality. A couple of Mapplethorpe's lesser-known mirror works are covered in a chicken-wire mesh that echoes the fishnets worn by Mapplethorpe's model Milton Moore in an adjacent portrait. In the same way that these mirrors seem to 'fishnet' the viewer's reflection, Tom Burr's *Black Folding Screen* (2010) nearby creates a moody blue glow that offers itself as a portable backdrop to a blue movie.

Night Work is well researched and certainly not prudish – plenty of erect cocks and latent violence. If anything, it tips into being too blasé about Mapplethorpe's shock value, although the deferential tone thankfully avoids Scissor Sisters's brand of arch camp. The band made their name with a disco cover of Pink Floyd's *Comfortably Numb* (1979), which explains their attachment to young American artists who share a knowing attitude to appropriation and a nostalgia for the sexy-punk scene of the 1980s. It's only a shame this show can't help reminding us how much tamer New York – and its art scene – has become in the 20 years since Mapplethorpe's death.

Jennifer Thatcher

Robert Mapplethorpe, *Lisa Lyon*, 1982, silver gelatin print, 41 x 51 cm. © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, used with permission. Courtesy Alison Jacques Gallery, London

There are bubbling-under theatrics in this solo exhibition by Neil Clements. A recording of a grandiose synthetic organ refrain plays on a loop, aurally filling the warehouse gallery space as it circles the pitched ceiling, whistling into the decayed holes in the roof and reverberating in the invasive foliage growing through the gallery's partially rotted walls. In the subtly disturbing context of the sound piece and venue, the Scottish artist's installation feels akin to a dystopic cathedral of the future, in which three 1.5-metre-cubed steel sculptures, each raised on breezeblocks and with a spray-painted colour gradient applied to the surface's utilitarian patterning, come across as venerated idols.

In many ways this reverence could be seen as a specifically masculine one suggested by the historical machismo of Minimalism and Clements's specific use of building hardware: the sculptures are made from industrial treadboard sheets (commonly used in nonslip flooring) and paint applied via automobile body-spray. Accompanying all this is a small framed photograph on the far wall, past a short step up to a permanent raised area in the depths of the building. This altarpiece depicts the space prior to the show's installation, in which the since-removed words 'bad history' were painted (in the sort of typography that was used in mid-twentieth-century science-fiction films to denote the future) on the same wall where the snap now hangs.

It is an evocative site-specific setup. One that moves the cube sculptures on from their formal lineage to 1960s 'finish fetish' and imbues them, beyond materiality, with a myriad of literary reference points. It's a further use of a strategy employed previously by Clements in a series of electric guitar-shaped matt painted canvases, which similarly paired the stark essentialist quality of Minimalism with some kind of greater signifier. In that case the nihilism of metal music and here, in the context of *Bad History*, the cultism of religion and transcendence. The strange, alienating cubes are literally elevated, and the placement of the photographic work suggests that one should genuflect before it. The treadboard material has been usurped, stripped of its utility, dehumanised, this, combined with the derelict state of the gallery space (soon to be demolished, along with the adjoining Woodmill studios, to make way for a housing development), disquietingly imply human vulnerability in relation to the material object. Clements seems to be bringing the fetishisation of *things* to its logical conclusion, placing them as the subject of almost

religious veneration, questioning what might happen when the balance of power between object and humanity is irretrievably destabilised. The soundwork, confidently blaring out one moment, abruptly stops before automatically replaying itself, suggesting that human, and specifically male, devolution of power to technology – allowing it to regulate modern existence, whether via computers, in the robotic production lines of car plants or in the prosaic protective qualities of the industrially produced treadboard – is misplaced at best, and dangerous at worst. *Oliver Basciano*

Neil Clements

Bad History

The Woodmill, London
15 January – 13 February



Bad History, 2011 Photo: Michael Heilgerner

Anti-Photography

Focal Point Gallery, Southend-on-Sea, and Beecroft Art Gallery, Westcliff-on-Sea

17 January – 2 April



Conceptual art, just like everything else, has a look, and Nancy Foote was quick to point this out in her 1976 *Artforum* essay 'The Anti-Photographers', in which she considered the aesthetic of artists (such as Ed Ruscha and the Bechers) who were using photography to reveal conceptual processes. This ambitious Focal Point Gallery exhibition, curated by Duncan Wooldridge over two sites in Southend, revisits Foote's text, using it to tell a history of the conceptual photograph. One of the defining features of the 'anti-photographers', argued Foote, was their utilitarian approach – a kind of antiaesthetic that wrenches itself purposefully away from the glossy, good-looking gallery print, with the aim, in her words, of transforming the photograph from 'a mirror to a window. What it reveals becomes important, not what it is.' The early works that kick off *Anti-Photography* fall under Foote's conceptual umbrella: John Hilliard's *Describing a Trajectory – Camera as a Projectile* series (1971) taken by a camera tossed in the air, and Ruscha's photobook *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966).

Move on several years, however, and you'll find Anne Collier, John Stezaker, Walead Beshty and Wolfgang Tillmans – artists who create work that is as much a mirror as it is a window, for whom 'what it is' is extremely important and who also create glossy, good-looking (conceptual) work. In Collier's *Anything You Want (Black)* (2006), a black record cover with an image of a crying eye on it is pictured in black space. The eye looks out at us from this 'dark room', engaging us with a poppy, sentimental gaze, but also with its status as both image and ageing physical object. James Welling's series of photographs, depicting white wax shavings dropped on black velvet drapery, are full of sensual texture, enjoyable intrigue and deliberately contextless melancholy, compounded by titles such as *Agony* (1981). And the reason that Beshty's prints, created by passing unexposed film through airport X-ray scanners, can induce conflicting intellectual and aesthetic pleasures is because they look so appealing: blurry

abstract swathes of gleaming violets, magentas and yellows. Rooms structured around themes such as 'The Non-Objectivity of the Document' and 'Arbitrariness of Subject Matter' fail to address that this all looks sexy and it all looks like art.

It's this concern with the photographic image as a carrier of colour, texture, and emotional and seductive sensation that seems to unite much of the contemporary work here – images being ramped up, rather than stripped back to their conceptual mechanics. David Raymond Conroy even finds something soulful in a slideshow of products being hawked on eBay, as fragments of sellers' bodies are caught in the act of photographing an object for sale (*Sometimes I Wish I Could Just Disappear*, 2009–11). This focus on the strength of images for their own sake rather than just the processes that they reveal brings into question whether 'anti-photography' was the most useful historical anchor for this exhibition. Nevertheless, the selected work does identify an increasing concern with the circulation and distribution of these small everyday seductions, and a set of artists who are collecting, manipulating and giving them back to us, even crueller, stranger and lovelier than they were before. *Laura McLean-Ferris*

From a pragmatist's point of view, there sometimes seems to be a void between what artists apparently do and what press-release writers say they do. For an example relating to Berlin-based artist Dirk Bell, take the following statement that his work 'explores the enduring tussle between love and freedom, along with the universal structures that shape and control our societies' while 'our attention is drawn to the immensity of the universe, the overwhelming power of nature and of the sublime'.

I'm standing looking at a dubious painting of a blue eye (*Blue Eye*, 2011), at a large welded star with lights inside that's attached to a computer game (*Merkaba*, 2011) and at some welded sculptures, one containing the letters of the words 'free' and 'love' (*FREELOVE*, 2010). Still playing the pragmatist, I'll assert the following: 1) I don't subscribe to the notion that 'structures' underlie 'society', and if I did, I can't see more than a peculiarly artworld construction of society here; 2) I don't know how to turn my attention to the 'immensity of the universe' – though I could 'gawp' as if sensing something ineffable; 3) I feel uncomfortable with the concept of the sublime.

Bell, initially working in painting, intentionally animates romantic themes and evokes an archaic mysticism, but problems arise when contemporary accounts of his practice exude a mysticism of their own. To take a critical stance in the spirit of Jacques Rancière, we might ask whether the vague language I've quoted actually belies a very certain prescription for how viewers are supposed to relate to this work. In this relation, reason is supposed to be supplanted at the point where the artwork takes over, at which point the viewer must presumably gawp as if (or actually?) sensing something ineffable.

Bell's *Merkaba*, undoubtedly an iconic sculpture, takes its title from a divine light vehicle present in modern esoteric teachings and related to meditation. In the computer game linked to this sculpture, you navigate, in first person, a 3D environment where you can knock over representations of Bell's sculptures, making an ominous clamour facilitated by a subwoofer. You attempt to balance 'love' and 'freedom'. Another sculpture in the exhibition, *Phedra* (2011), is an open door with a crystal and basin behind it. On the door, wiped out of the dirt, is the image of a classically proportioned female form, perhaps relating to Phaedra, a mythical character who concocted a story of rape in order to exact revenge on one who spurned her love. At the level of description, before we prescribe relationships to it, there is reason to be interested here. It's brave to mine mysticism and romanticism in the light of postmodernism, and it's no surprise that it has caused critical problems given the censure of both terms. So perhaps the success of Bell's work is that it appeals to us to work out a better way of analysing these themes within contemporary art. As yet, however, this appeal might just be a background noise. *James Clegg*

Dirk Bell

The Modern Institute, Glasgow
15 January – 19 February



Dirk Bell, 2010 (Installation view, Courtesy the artist and the Modern Institute Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow)

As a practitioner, curator and teacher, the German-born Uruguayan artist Luis Camnitzer (he's resided in the US since the 1960s for political and personal reasons) has been essential in expanding the parameters of conceptual art beyond the narrow, New York-based understanding of 'the idea' as the ultimate and historically ineluctable dematerialisation of the art object. He was, for instance, a co-organiser of *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origins, 1950s-1980s* at the Queens Museum of Art in 1999, a show which defined conceptual practice through its far-flung actualisations. The current survey of his own work at El Museo, organised by and drawn from the Zurich-based Daros Latinamerica Collection, indicates that he understands art as at once an intellectual, poetic and political act, reflecting, in part, the importance of perception and viewer participation in much innovative postwar Latin American art.

Even the earliest works on view, for example a 1966-8 vacuum-formed plastic panel reading 'This is a mirror. You are a written sentence', not only present idea as art and text as medium, but also create a tension between the literal, the logical and the poetically imaginable. It's the slippage of meaning at the juncture where the viewer engages with the work which is Camnitzer's focus. A parallel concern with economic disjunctions underlies the biting critique of pieces like *Signature by the Slice* (1971/2007), in which shaped slips of paper form a loaf, suggesting that the market's demand for originality and uniqueness cannibalises artists.

While issues of value and exchange are deeply embedded in much of the work, what underlies it is a realisation that ideas have significant, even concrete consequences, such as the effect of the market on artists' lives, or the violence practised by rightwing regimes during the 1970s in Latin America – another subject critical to the artist's oeuvre. Thus a tension of ethical

import exists between the immateriality of a concept and how it is interpreted. Its crux is the point at which viewer engages work, a place at which meaning becomes ambiguous and the consumer a partner in its interpretation.

The subtlety of this understanding, and the artist's belief that one should question received wisdom, is mirrored by his deft exposure of the cant behind popular myths. *Twin Towers* (2002), composed of two cards, a nine and a jack standing upright, suggests with stunning brevity and effectiveness that the imperial presumption of calling a building the World Trade Center, and the political order built upon its destruction, are part of a single cycle of hubris and nemesis. Too much of the work on view, however, hews to a comfortable progressive obviousness. *Compass* (2003), in which 'West' is altered to read 'Best', or *El Viaje (The Journey)* (1991), in which three blades, each sporting two round Christmas ornaments, are inscribed with the names of Columbus's ships, superficially revisit old tropes and suggest that Camnitzer has not always questioned his own assumptions as deeply as his art suggests viewers interrogate theirs. *Joshua Mack*

Luis Camnitzer

El Museo del Barrio, New York

2 February – 29 May

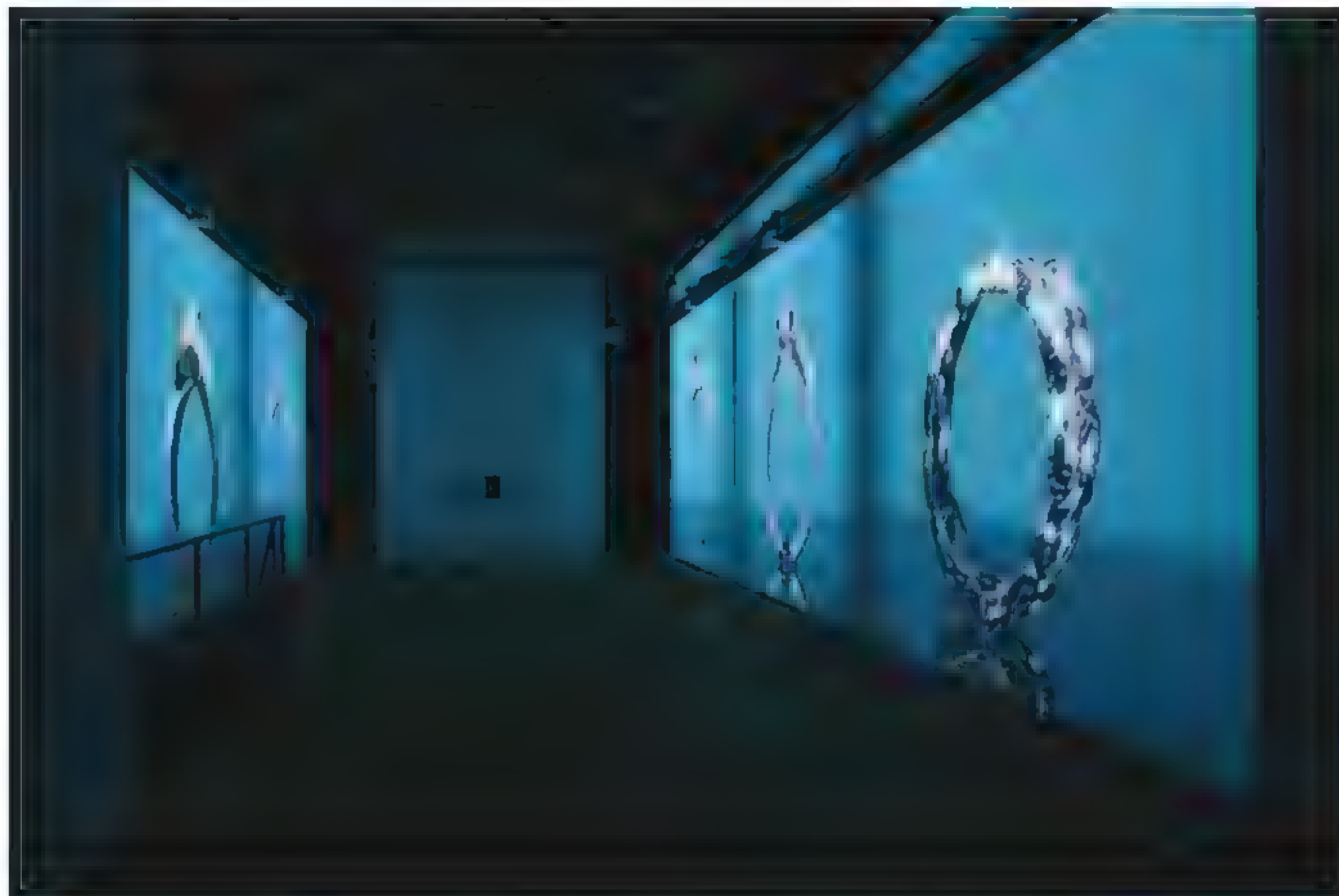


Compass, 2003, inkjet print, 100 x 91 cm,
Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich
Photo Peter Schachli, Zurich

Glen Fogel

With Me... You

Participant Inc, New York
23 January – 27 February



Glen Fogel has proved particularly adept at interpolating personal narrative into the messy politics of media culture. For his 2009 installation *Art from Kansas City*, he appropriated male escort Mike Jones's memoir of his relationship with evangelical icon Ted Haggard. Blacking out the majority of the text, Fogel inserted his name in lieu of the author's, and left uncensored sentences containing the word 'Art' – Haggard's pseudonym – turning it into a tidy, efficient pun parodying an artist's inherently compromised political position. Such slippages of the self took another turn with *Glen from Colorado* (2009). Featuring the name 'Glen' spelled out Dan Flavin-like in bare white fluorescent lights, the work pulsed as text-to-speech software read out, in an alien computer voice, the contents of personal letters written to Fogel.

Similar convolutions return with his first solo exhibition in New York, *With Me... You*, at Participant Inc, where the artist's private correspondence makes another notable appearance. Written to him variously by friends and more-than-friends, the intimate letters are blown up as very large *trompe l'oeil* paintings, as if they were literally smoothed out... wrinkles, red stains and all. They read like a soap opera script, or perhaps something scribbled by hand in high school. *From Jamie, August 20* (2010) exclaims, 'Glen Fogel, what magic and enchantment that name is to me'. While from a slightly different angle, *From Jess, September 30, 1994* (2010) reads, 'You were just a heartless, selfish, immature wannabe'. And as if in some sort of awkward adolescent three-way, each letter's author refers to the others by name. Or at least, some kind of name; in another nice trick, Fogel supplants real names with fake doubles, to protect identities. Propriety is again obfuscated by its cliquy, coded other. Delightful as these are to read, though, the letters gain little when roped into a painterly discourse – unless, in their almost Duchampian absurdity, they're meant to challenge that dusty myth of the artist-as-genius.

Perhaps more nuanced, and less self-conscious, is Fogel's spectacular five-channel video installation *With Me... You* (2011), which features five slowly rotating wedding rings projected side-by-side. Nearly as tall as the ceiling and occupying almost all the wall space, the work's epic scale is both stunning and a bit frightening. Evoking the Home Shopping Network's rotating ring displays, the objects are washed now and then in pleasing monochromatic tones. Glistening as they turn, the rings shine in that familiar TV way: exaggerated, with hyperreal twinkles. Though they look brand new, they all come from Fogel's immediate family members: he spent several months gathering them from his sisters, mother and grandmother. Belonging to a sort of irreplaceable family history, value is thus displaced from something priced to something defiantly priceless. Nearly interchangeable as objects, the rings hover, like much of his work, between proper names – that is, between sign and symbol, object and metaphor – never fully possessed. *David Everitt Howe*

With Me... You, 2011,
5-channel video, solid
state relay, speaker,
19 min 45 sec
Courtesy the artist and
Participant Inc, New York

Is the difference between eclecticism and pastiche simply a function of framing? When an artist works in many different styles, let alone mediums, and the results are brought together in one place, we regard the outcome as a kind of willed eclecticism. When those styles all appear in a single work, or when their allusions to other works of art, or artists' styles, are so strong as to be quickly recognisable, it's pastiche. But what happens when the frame that keeps eclecticism distinct from pastiche begins to slip, when we find ourselves caught in the midst of a search (for a style) and a comment (on 'style' itself) without knowing which is which, or even if the question itself is valid (after all, who would think to talk about 'style' anymore)?

Valid or not, it is a question that will confront any viewer of E'wao Kagoshima's output since 1976, which is when the artist arrived in New York and began the various artistic campaigns that are well represented at Mitchell Algu's newest enterprise, confounded with Amy Greenspon. Algu built his reputation on finding artists that time and taste have let slip from public view, and true to form, Kagoshima will be a revelation for devotees of New York's East Village art scene of the 1970s and 80s, or for anyone looking for some historical anchoring for the eclecticism (pastiche?) of much of what is going on in New York today

Kagoshima's recent work is represented by a trio of paintings: *Monkey Smoking* (2007), *Overtime (Black Fate)* (2008) and *Wing* (2010), the last of which, with its delicate drawing work – web, figure, white aeroplane silhouette – overtaken by an application of bright yellow impasto, reminds one of that other great eclecticist/pasticheur, Martin Kippenberger. *Overtime*, on the other hand, looks like a cross between imagery from *The Railway Series* (now the wildly successful children's television series *Thomas and Friends*) and the imagination that informs Hayao Miyazaki's surreal fantasies.

But it's the earlier work, dating from the late 1970s to the mid-80s, which shows Kagoshima's quick stylistic moves and borrowings. A series of untitled ink and gouache on paper drawings from that period echoes Guston; another untitled charcoal, pastel and metallic paint on paper work from 1981 looks to combine Léger's colour schemes with the figure schemes of Picasso's vaguely porno sketchbook pastiches from the early 1960s; the many untitled mixed-media collages evoke Josef Albers (linear and colour field abstractions) on the one hand and John Baldessari (variably de-faced figures in photographs) on the other; and then *Mambo-species and Red Bubbles* (1976) looks like nothing so much as Peter Saul

The show comes to stand as the record of an impressive and ambitious hunt, where new terrain and game required all kinds of cunning and adaptation. That there is no work from the 20-plus years between 1985 and 2007 makes one wonder what happened in the interim. Perhaps too many less adept poachers entered the scene.

Jonathan T.D. Neil

E'wao Kagoshima

Algu Greenspon Gallery, New York
19 January – 5 March



Infrared, 1976, oil on paper, 23 x 23 cm

Ellen Gallagher

Greasy

Gagosian Gallery, West 24th Street, New York
22 January – 26 February



Ellen Gallagher's ongoing artistic exploration of race in America has balanced critique with wit and whimsy, toed the line between figuration and abstraction, and somehow simultaneously displayed restraint and abandon. In her last New York outing, at the Whitney Museum in 2005, Gallagher showed *DeLuxe* (2004–5), a suite of playfully embellished advertisements for hair-straightening and skin-lightening products and wigs from the pages of popular black periodicals dating from the 1930s to the 1970s. While

Gallagher has continued to mine this rich repository of popular black ephemera, she has gradually shifted from using it as support to material, burying its traces, and the racial histories held within, into the surfaces of her exquisite paintings.

The large-scale works on display at Gagosian are assembled from fragments of this found material, stained and painted to the limits of legibility. Their surfaces are scored and finished so precisely that they resemble marquetry more than collage. In *Greasy* (2011), the original text and image is flooded with white ink, its surface burnished to resemble smooth porcelain. Bits of bodies and objects, surfacing like cereal floating in a primordial bowl of milk, swarm around a celestial being holding a stick. Its torso, a patchwork of rectangular text panels, degenerates into cryptic Braille-like strings of e's and o's. The only two vowels in *negro*, these letters may serve as alphabetical analogues for the stereotypical bug eyes and thick lips of minstrel-show blackface that infested much of Gallagher's earlier work.

An Experiment of Unusual Opportunity (2008), titled for the notorious Tuskegee syphilis experiment (beginning in 1932, the US Public Health Service withheld treatment to hundreds of syphilitic black men so as to study the disease's progression), is more sinister and abstract. Patches of bright colour and cascading lines distinguish sinewy jellyfishlike creatures from a forebodingly dark background. In the largely monochromatic *O.K. Corral* (2008) and *Puppy Chow* (2009), thin, even strips of indigo-dyed pages constitute both figure and ground, making it hard to distinguish form from pattern, giving the compositions an internal turbulence that is both compelling and frustrating. Floating in these swirling inky depths are tangles of tentacles and tendrils, half-octopus, half-wig hybrids, deep-sea grotesques descended from drowned slaves that might inhabit the mythical underwater realm of Drexciya.

Morphia (2008–9), a series of eight collage drawings, features similar shapeshifters. Some resemble portraits, parts of heads visible underneath piles of dense curls and delicate tracteries, while others transmute skull or ribcagelike forms into fantastic beasts. Double-sided, executed on translucent paper seemingly embedded with squiggles and often perforated, the drawings are, by turns, opaque and transparent, their forms always labile.

Unlike Gallagher's previous work, these images do not critique race from within the familiarity of stereotype or the facticity of the historical record. They are idiosyncratic and ambiguous, but confident. The distortions of racism are writ large, more visible but less clear. Race is rendered monstrous and spectral, an absent presence that continues to menace and haunt our postidentity moment. *Murtaza Vali*

Eli Hansen

Next Time, They'll Know It's Us

The Company, Los Angeles

21 January – 26 February

It's easier to get there than it is to leave. Sometimes people never leave. Supplies are sparing or expensive, and so the natives survive with what's on hand; jury-rigging is common, and the skills most prized are those of independence (homebuilding, crafts, mechanics). Backwoods alchemists used to make moonshine with elaborate concoctions and equipment, the sinister piping and processing bent into elbows and curved around itself, scuffed and bruised. Though moonshine might still get cooked up in certain Appalachian neighbourhoods, the main product for rural chemists these days is methamphetamine, made with dangerous and rattletrap methods out of medicines and cleaning products you might find in your bathroom. Instead of white lab coats you see overalls and T-shirts, trucker hats and biker vests. But backwoods alchemists are still chemists of a kind, scientific experts with a technological expertise derived from years, sometimes generations of having to make do making drugs, or otherwise having to figure out how to craft things by hand.

The glass for beakers and pipettes here are handblown, but less *objet d'art* and more hippy make-do, a sense of the psychedelic infused with the real need to have something to smoke pot (or speed) out of. It homes in on that tender moment sometime in the 1970s when the hillbills got replaced by hippies and bikers in the American wilderness.

Vashon Island, Washington state, where artist Eli Hansen currently resides, is one of these places. Unconnected by any road from the mainland, though technically really close to the metropolis of Seattle,

it's a good place to get lost in the Pacific Northwest, not off the grid exactly, but close to being off the grid. Hansen, formerly of Tacoma, seems to have connected all the strange strains of regional life into something rather wonderful that easily finds a fitting though unlikely home in contemporary art.

His sculptures mix purchased and blown pipettes into elaborate, semifunctioning fountains and crypto-mystic objects, where LED lights flicker beneath crystalline blown glass and the lists of materials might sometimes require either a shaman or a chemist to interpret. Wood recovered from crumbling houses and from the drift found on the beach is incorporated into sculptures which, with coloured beakers and simple machines, feel like artefacts from a different civilisation, and in some ways they are.

While so-called regional art can come off as treacly or dumb (think cow-skull paintings or the fascist faux-wonderland of Thomas Kinkade), Hansen has found a way to collapse all the idealism and escapism, outlaws and dropouts of his rural home into a compelling visual language, one that's tinged with a real human emotion, all the regrets and magic of weathered ideals. Reading the titles of Hansen's pieces (*We didnt plan it this way; we just got older* or *If I could explain how things ended up this way, I wouldnt be here*, all works 2011) fills one with a sense of hope and eventual sadness about what we set out from and where we actually ended up. *Andrew Berardini*



this is how it begins, 2011, bucket, glass, wood, vinyl, water, water pump (standing Soxhlet extractor and Allihn condenser), 146 x 18 x 9 cm. Courtesy the artist and the company, Los Angeles

Paul Stoelting's sculptures always seem to be sliding away from you. Objects that at first appear relatively straightforward – a length of timber, a picture frame – soon reveal themselves to be unstable, skewed and evasive. Stoelting's exhibition *Content Aware* is dominated by a series of sculptures that look like supports for paintings: rectangular frames of wood hung on or propped against the wall. Closer inspection reveals the wood to be uniformly bevelled at 45 degrees, giving the impression that the object is oriented towards a vanishing point somewhere beyond one or the other of its corners. Since the frames hang against the wall on (what one assumes is) a deliberately ugly, pragmatic block screwed into the masonry, those rectangles whose bevels slope upwards are incapable of hanging without sliding off. Hence their positioning on the floor.

All of which is a long way of saying that these sculptures pack a lot into forms so ostensibly simple. They are complicated further by the application of illogical, faux-shadowy spraypaint along certain edges and, most significantly, by the ambiguous photographs fixed to panels at opposite corners. For example, *Passage Massage* (all works 2011), itself a phonemic stumbling block, is the title of a structure cradling two images: one depicting an empty, nondescript garage and a shot of a folded print that I recognised as a piece of the artist's earlier work. Reaching for a connection between the two might lead us to their equally striking perspectives, each of which runs counter to the implied perspective of their wooden support, but that's not really the point. What is significant is the sense of meanings becoming untethered, which is achieved, oddly, by these images being fixed to formally solid sculptural supports.

Other works address the subject of framing directly, incorporating photographs of paintings (one kitschy landscape and one Old Master-ish still life) in gilt frames. Perhaps more useful, however, are photographs that show holes – a patched bullet-hole in glass, a hole melted into the plastic of a vending machine. Stoelting's investigations apply more to the gap than what is around it. *Upper Level Management* features a photograph of a computer hard drive in a black puddle – an obsolete information carrier adrift in the void.

Less complex are Stoelting's untitled shelving units – designed by a random mathematical system and consequently askew, unevenly complicated and dubiously useful – and his lengths of warped timber – also untitled, covered in patterned duct tape and slouching against the wall. These latter objects, recalling both André Cadere's *Barres de Bois* and John McCracken's leaning planks, beguile us with their cheerful veneers (one zebra print, one purple tie-dye) and their casual indifference to purpose. Like minimalist punks, they don't mean anything much, and they don't seem to care. *Jonathan Griffin*



Paul Stoelting *Content Aware*

Pepin Moore, Los Angeles
21 January – 26 February

Europe |

Roman Szlachcic wears a red tartan shirt and, his glasses still on, sleeps on a pink pillow under a photograph of his dead father. Dad is hunting, shotgun slung around his neck. He has caught something big; he was a top dog in the Polish politburo and shot bears for Khrushchev. Two facing screens form Anna Senkara's video installation *Szlachcic* (2010), about the son and his life now. Polish memory art, then – you'd be forgiven for thinking that's what all Polish contemporary art is about, but then they have a lot to remember. And we have a duty to listen to their memories, because we have been prevented from hearing them. (According to historian Norman Davies in 2003's *Rising '44*, for example, 95 percent of British intelligence archives of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 are still unavailable.)

Szlachcic junior appears to be in his fifties and lives with his medic friend Jacek. These are the forgotten faces of Communist madness, yesterday's men hanging onto today. Both smoke like chimneys. Jacek likes to grill Roman about his father and his proximity to power. Power was shitty, Szlachcic insists; but Jacek, like a nagging spouse, pushes him: "C'mon, you must miss it a bit". The names of Russian and Polish politicians are dropped: aside from Khrushchev, Szlachcic's father also worked for Wladyslaw Gomulka; Roman tells the camera how he himself once drove Edward Gierek to Warsaw from Gdansk, how he once had a three-day party with Yuri Andropov when the latter was head of the KGB. This jolly shindig was in Lavrenty Beria's old place. He tells us that General Jaruzelski, who imposed martial law in 1981, was "a stiff guy". Sitting in Roman's cobwebbed dacha in Magdalenka, we are a long way psychogeographically – but not so far on the map – from the forests of Katyn and the NKVD mass murder of Polish officers. On the screen opposite is a shorter film: monochrome hunters in the forest after some hogs. Images of guns, deer left hanging by the neck – this is where bad things happened.

Senkara, here, is gently teasing the once-mighty, now suffering an impotence that no OD on Viagra will ever cure. Norman Davies again: 'Poland's insurrectionary tradition had never failed to provoke a chorus of critics who mocked the record of lost causes and romantic catastrophes'. Senkara sets a tone that is beautifully achieved, wistful, sad, even tragic, but still somehow wryly amusing – as evidenced in the shots of Roman and Jacek poking at condom wrappers in the woods. Neighbours spread rumours that they are gay, invent a story that they are brothers and laugh bitterly. Senkara's work is thus a powerful documentary, but therein sits perhaps its relative weakness as art. *Szlachcic* lacks the heavy impact of, say, Miroslaw Balka's repeated quoting of Paul Celan or his stunningly insistent video *Primitive* (2008), featuring a clip of the ex-T4 SS man Franz Suchomel from Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985): a fat, jowly pale-blue ghost chewing gum, someone's dull uncle who can still sing the Treblinka guards' song. As Timothy Snyder writes in *Bloodlands* (2010), it is 'morally urgent that we understand the actions of the perpetrators... as the moral danger is... that one might be a perpetrator'. Senkara shows that Szlachcic had – in Snyder's term – 'negative opportunism' and that this, tragically, is not an inhuman or subhuman trait but all too comprehensively 'normative'. For us to understand this is, hopefully, to avoid becoming the makers of what Nicholson Baker has called 'human smoke'. *John Quin*

Anna Senkara *Szlachcic*

Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw
11 December – 20 February



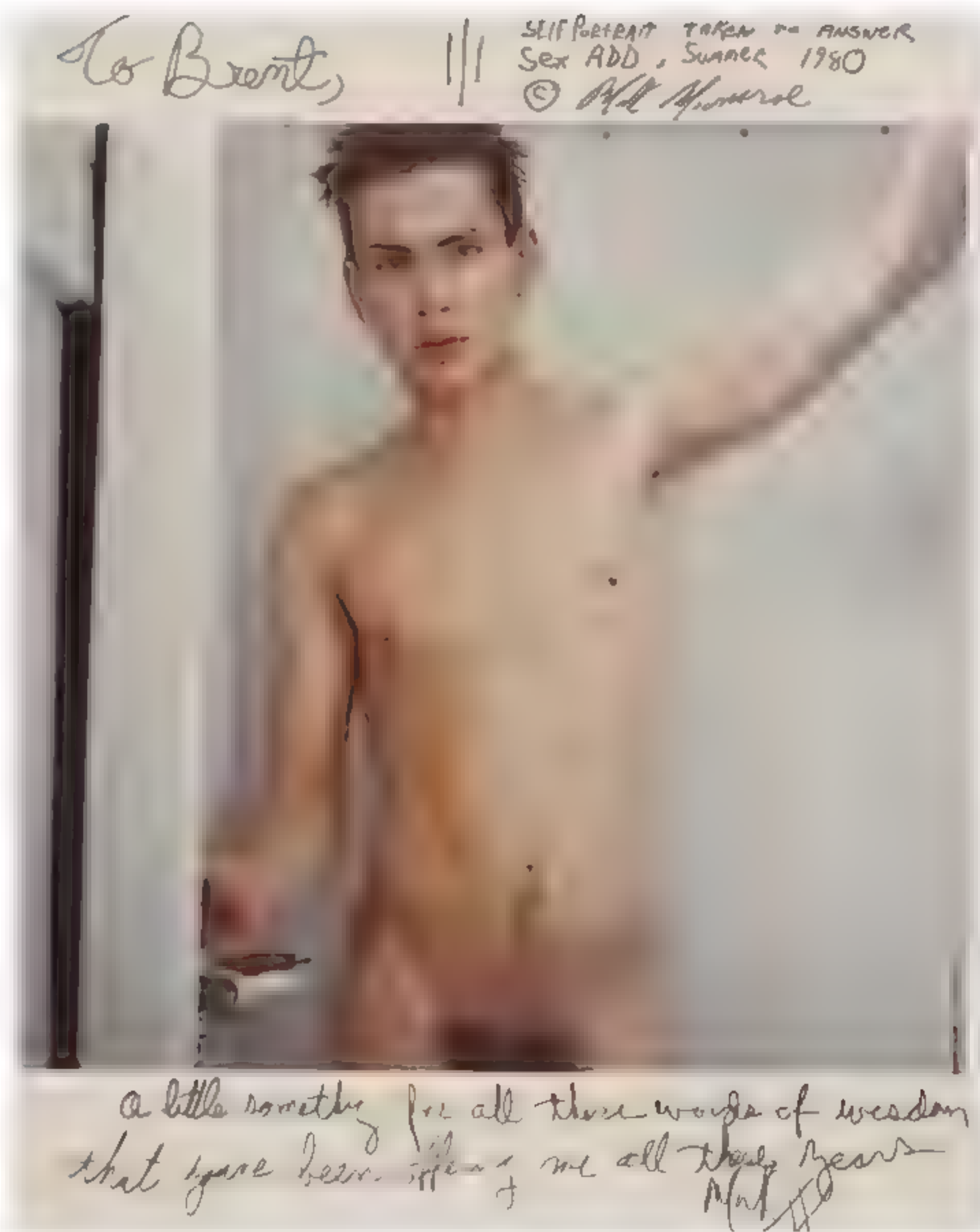
Szlachcic (video still), 2010, video installation. Courtesy the artist and Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw

Self-Portrait (to Brent), 1982, c-print, negative sandwich, retouched with ink and marker, 51 x 41 cm, private collection Brent Sikkema. © Estate of Mark Morrisroe (Ringier Collection) at Fotomuseum Winterthur

A roomful of sandwich prints opens the Mark Morrisroe retrospective: colour negatives that the American photographer, who died in 1989, duplicated in black and white before enlarging both, one on top of the other. These works, which date from 1982 to 87, are mainly, but not exclusively, set in interiors – still lifes and the artist's friends clothed and nude – along with cityscapes: casually or studiedly composed, with traces of darkroom alchemy and scribbling left visible on the margins. The prints are as saturated as cinema projection, the compositions unruly but assured as they mix registers of tone and subject. Even when brutally cropped and set in makeshift domesticity, the results are lavish, chiaroscuro images.

An exposition of Morrisroe's method follows this overwhelming introduction. It is an abrupt step backwards to the gelatin silver prints of his first solo exhibition, at Boston's 11th Hour gallery, in 1981 – 17 photographs in which the artist tested his artistic muscles, considering what his oeuvre was to be and freeing himself from the influences of past teachers. After this come scenes from punk Boston in the late 1970s and early 80s, then 129 Polaroids selected from the 800 in Morrisroe's estate. Thanks to Polaroid's Artist Support Program, Morrisroe received a lifelong supply of the self-developing film from 1979; the images are mostly sketches rather than finished articles for exhibition, though the horror of Morrisroe's early death leaps out in abutting self-portraits from 1983 and 89, which present a virile young man and an emaciated patient. The show also includes experimental gum prints and cyanotypes, ephemera and the five issues of the photocopied gossip magazine *Dirt* that the artist produced with Lynelle White in 1975 and 76. The final works are photograms that Morrisroe developed during the last years of his life when confined by illness, his raw material including chest X-rays that reveal his clotted lungs: these he overlaid with searing colours, and they end the show in untempered defiance.

Writing on Morrisroe's work inevitably alludes to his construction of identity in portraits and self-portraits and its reality or veracity. Degrees of reality or truth are hardly quantifiable or indeed particularly meaningful in visual art, even if recognisable figures such as Jonathan (now Jack) Pierson count among the cast Morrisroe stalked with his camera through bedrooms and bathrooms. It scarcely seems to matter if, as Fionn Meade says in the exhibition's catalogue, he had a 'longstanding and compulsive desire to document his life as noteworthy and notorious'; that very activity is marrow for many an artist, and how each does it is what differentiates one from another. With its very thorough research and great detail, the curating of this show evinces the voracious drive, both contemporary and art-historical, to unveil everything in the pursuit of understanding, with damaging consequences. By giving so much space to material that Morrisroe made as a very young man, there is a danger of intimating that his work was jejune – that of an immature artist working out his traumas in public. Part of the tragedy of Morrisroe dying at thirty is that he did not live to determine where his art began and ended. Morrisroe was his own muse, and what of it? His finest photographs need no backstory to vindicate them, no gossip asides to be spectacular. *Aoife Rosenmeyer*



Mark Morrisroe

Fotomuseum Winterthur
27 November – 13 February



Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Stazione Leopolda, Florence

8½

13 January – 6 February

When the movie *Otto e mezzo* (8½) by Federico Fellini was released in 1963, the Italian writer Alberto Moravia wrote in *L'Espresso* that Guido, the film's main character (a bespectacled director and obvious alter ego of the author), was 'an erotomaniac, a sadist, a masochist, a mythomaniac, a man afraid of life, a sufferer from nostalgia for the mother's breast, a clown, a mystifier and a cheat'. This exhibition's spectacular lineup – including Pawel Althamer's overblown, naked and anatomically correct self-portrait as *Balloon* (1999–2007), John Bock's milking machines in *Meechfieber* (2004), Martin Creed's *Everything Is Going to Be Alright* (Work No. 1086) (2011), Tino Sehgal's stripteasing guards (*Selling Out*, 2002), Paul McCarthy's President Bush copulating with a pig (*Static (Pink)*, 2004–9) and Maurizio Cattelan's prosthetic doppelgänger in (death) bed with himself (*We*, 2010) – proves that Massimiliano Gioni made a good choice when he reused Fellini's title for this show, which celebrates the eight-and-a-half years the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi has spent under his curatorial lead.

The first group show ever organised by the foundation, 8½ is also the first one to take place outside of Milan and in direct connection with the brand (which celebrates its 100th anniversary at the

same time, also in Florence, as guest of honour at the January Pitti trade fashion show). The bare, cathedrallike halls of the nineteenth-century Stazione Leopolda have been left untouched, except from a central box hosting the projection of Peter Fischli and David Weiss's *Parts of a Film with Rat and Bear* (2008), where the two heroes play and float across the gilded baroque rooms of Milan's Palazzo Litta – a video shot while their retrospective magically took over the building. For those who have seen the works in their site-specific locations, an inevitable *Amarcord* (another film by Fellini, from 1973, whose title translates as 'I remember') syndrome takes place: Gioni's policy of never installing the foundation's exhibits in white cubes, picking instead unexpected city corners, from public squares to train stations, ancient palazzi and forgotten architectural treasures, enhanced the aura of the artworks when they were first exhibited.

The majority of works by the 13 artists involved are the same ones that were originally commissioned and produced by the foundation, with a few exceptions: since Paola Pivi's all-white live animal farm (*Interesting*, 2006) was irreproducible here, it is replaced by the monumental photo *One Love* (2007), based on the same subject, while Cattelan's Boetti-esque self-portrait from Dakis Joannou's collection supplants his infamous *Untitled* sculptures hanging from an oak tree of Piazza XXIV Maggio, sabotaged in 2004 by an intolerant (and very drunk) Milan resident after fierce media uproar. (Last autumn, Cattelan took his revenge, when he positioned his 11m *L.O.V.E.*, a marble hand giving the finger, right in front of the city's stock exchange.) The intimate narratives of Darren Almond (*If I Had You*, 2003), Anri Sala (*Long Sorrow*, 2005) and Tacita Dean (*Still Life*, 2009) counterbalance the mood, and Urs Fischer's dreamy, self-descriptive sculpture *House of Bread* (2004) quietly closes the parade. Fellini, whose cinema was both highbrow and enormously popular in Italy, is a good reference point also for another reason. In Milan, a city with no contemporary art museum, the last eight-and-a-half years of Trussardi exhibitions have made a difference. They have made contemporary art more visible, increased its audience and gained room for some freedom of expression, besides pointing out that in order to show good art, the space is less important than the serious will to do so. A lesson still to be learned.

Barbara Casavecchia

Peter Fischli and David Weiss, *Parts of a Film with Rat and Bear* (video still), 2008, video, 54 min. © the artists. Courtesy the artists, Spinneth Maqers, Berlin & London; Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Henrik Olesen

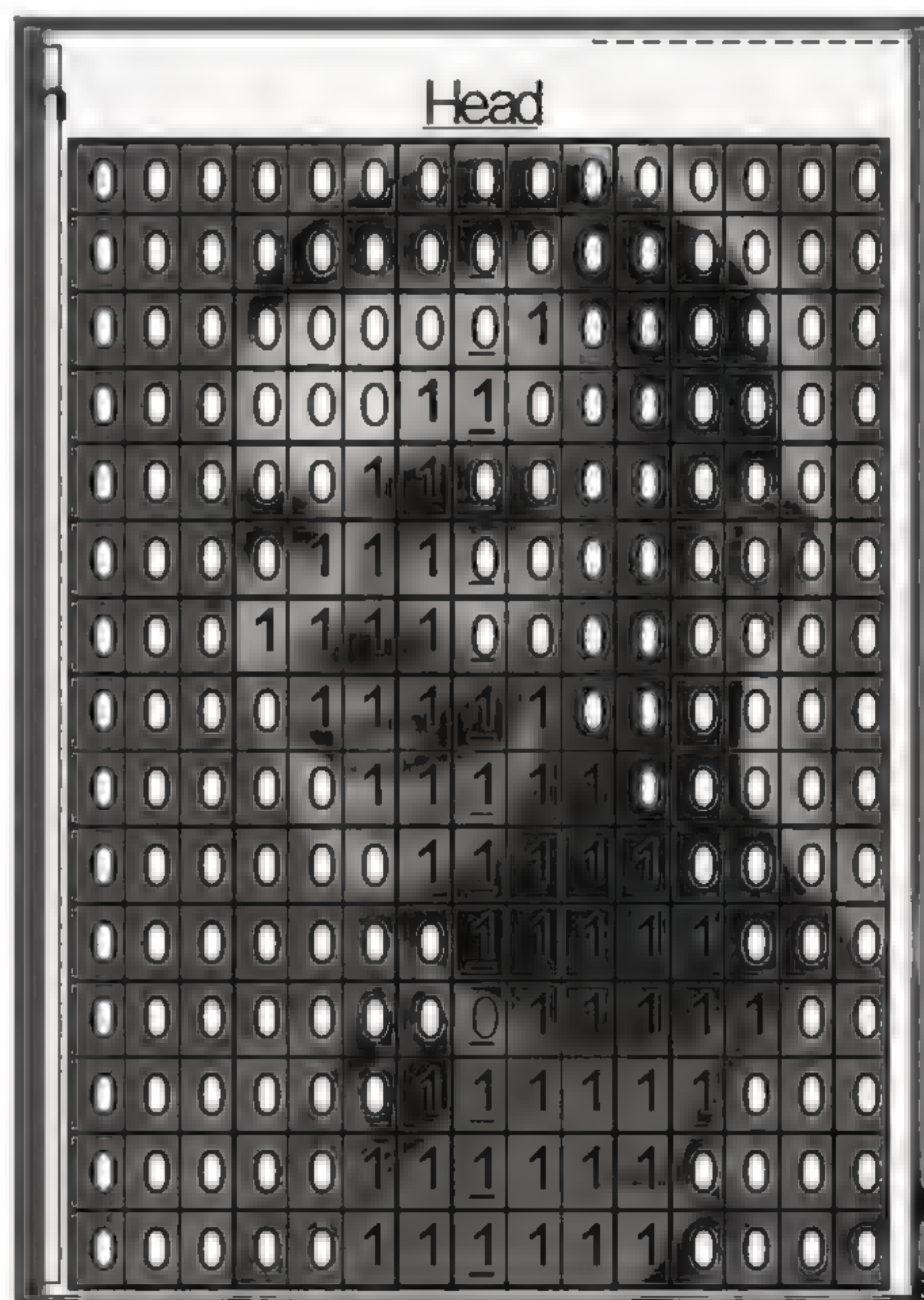
Malmö Konsthall
4 December – 30 January

Although Malmö is far from devoid of the issues of race and inequality that dog Europe in general, one could be led to believe, upon entering the cafe of its *konsthall* on a Saturday afternoon, that the city is exclusively populated by young, sophisticated, white, heterosexual middle-class families. Upon registering this rather quaint sociological observation, my first reaction is to (perhaps impishly) think that this is a perfect context for Henrik Olesen's first survey in his native region. After all, goes my reasoning, what more does an audience deserve than to be exposed to the normative social and sexual power structures with which it is complicit, and which Olesen seeks to challenge? And if members of the public were looking forward to a bit of weekend diversion in the form of dazzling art objects, they would be sadly disappointed by an exhibition which, in accordance with Olesen's rigorously spare and ad hoc aesthetic, was unglamorously composed of works on paper, computer parts, vitrines, language and one large sculpture. Indeed, Malmö Konsthall seems almost devoid of artworks, despite the fact that the exhibition consists of a selection of the past 15 years of Olesen's production.

A postconceptual gay-activist artist, Olesen is as much an unorthodox historian of homosexuality and art as he is an artist. His research-based work uses archival techniques and text to investigate, record and present marginalised or suppressed histories of homosexuality vis-à-vis dominant power structures. Here, one of the more compelling examples of this is the multipart *How Do I Make Myself a Body?* (2008–10), a series of collages combined with text which tell the story of Alan Turing, the progenitor of the binary code which generated the computer. The collages recount Turing's belief that the body was a machine and the history of his homosexuality – for which he was forced to take hormones, which made him grow breasts, a factor which led to his suicide. The tragically poetic irony here is, of course, how Turing's life proved that the body is not a machine. This work is smartly paired with the series *I Do Not Go to Work Today, I Don't Think I Go Tomorrow* (2010), originally featured in the last Berlin Biennale. Comprising examples of modern technology, such as an Apple G4, which are meticulously deconstructed, their components systematically laid out from large to small on wood and Plexiglas panels, these works reflect a rather naive and inconclusive attempt to understand a mechanism that rules our lives.

The majority of the rest of the exhibition is of a more Victorian nature. From a series of master-and-slave collages based on those of Max Ernst, in which Tom of Finland and other gay icons are inserted, to a thoroughly compelling takeaway zine, *Sex (In Public)* (2006), which contrasts a history of nineteenth-century homosexual codes and cruising spots in London and Paris with a history of homosexuals and art, the suggestion here is that homosexuality and its criminalisation were a Victorian construct. Exceptions to this are a few remakes of works by heterosexual artists, such as a giant, partially burnt Claes Oldenburg matchstick, originally featured at the Konsthall in 1987.

All that said, where does this leave the white (etc) families of Malmö? At the risk of seeming cynical, I'll end by asking: is it perhaps a little naive of me to think that such an exhibition *really* challenges, as opposed to merely confirms, the structures by which they abide? *Chris Sharp*



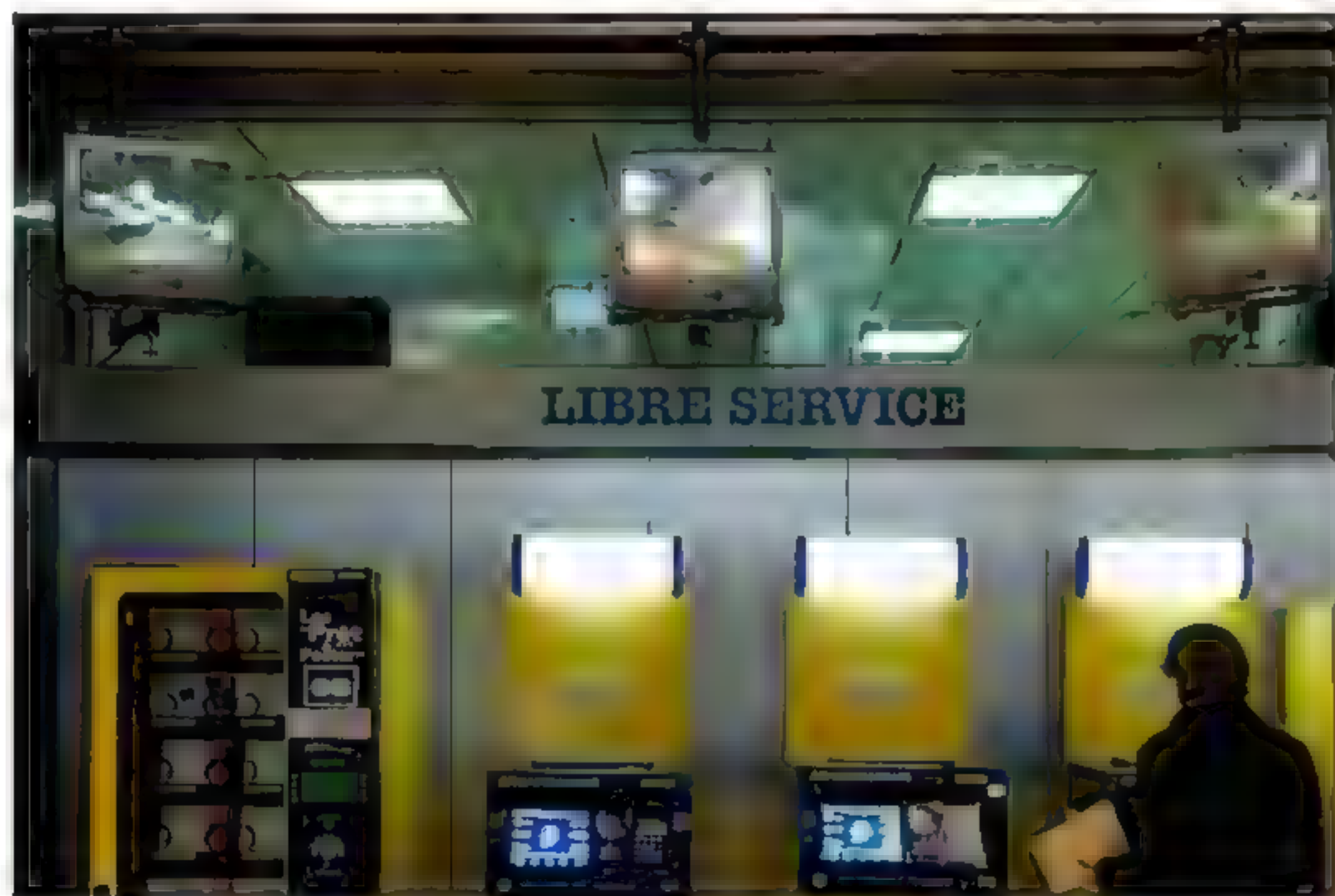
Some Illustrations to the Life of Alan Turing, 2008,
16 computer printouts on newsprint. Courtesy Malmö Konsthall

Hassan Khan

Lust

Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

29 January – 5 March



Lust is an exhibition of six nominal artworks requiring textual and contextual supports, including a price list. Pride of place is given to *Banque Bannister* (2010), a copper and brass banister unaccompanied by stairs, unattached to any wall and listed at €25,000 (plus 8 percent VAT of €2,000). A press release tells us that this is an 'exact replica of the banister at the entrance of the Central Bank of Egypt in Cairo'. Its creator, the 'artist, musician and writer' Hassan Khan, was born in London but lives in Cairo. Perhaps he is there at the time of writing (7 February), protesting in Tahrir Square. Perhaps not. The Central Bank is definitely still on Elgomhoreya Street. However, with its foreign currency rating downgraded from 'stable' to 'negative' as of yesterday, it is now on shakier footing than when Khan, who presents absence and absents presence in much of his work, made its unfixed handrail reappear in a commercial gallery in Paris.

On a far wall is *Muslimgauze R.I.P.* (2010), a Blu-ray projection of a boy meandering through a cluttered apartment in, according to the press release, Manchester (though actually Ljubljana) during the Thatcher era (1982). Next door to the apartment, so we are told in an accompanying essay, Bryn Jones (1961–1999), under the name Muslimgauze, is inventing a form of electronic music inspired by conflicts in the Middle East, a region (we are told) he never visited. On the wall between the Cairo banister and the Manchester/Ljubljana apartment is *Insecure* (2002), a horizontal line of 11 vinyl-lettered texts that list 'ten strategies you use to seduce others'. One: 'Whisper your name over and over to yourself till you feel like it doesn't make sense'. Ten: 'Wonder what you really want from the closest person to you'. Speakers amplify the sounds that the projected boy creates as he opens doors, turns a lamp on and off, empties a cupboard, and so on. It is a sensuously and aesthetically satisfying presence and experience. So, too, is the digitally reconstructed readymade (*Evidence of Evidence II*, 2010) on the wall opposite: a giant scanned image of a crumbling junk-store painting of a vase of flowers. Through a doorway is *G.R.A.H.A.M.* (2008), a silent 10-minute sequence of a man posing for the camera, the video slowed down so that it lasts 14 minutes. The artist, we are told, asked his friend Graham personal questions while he posed, but forbade him to respond. This is frustrating, or frustrated, or both.

In an adjacent room lurks *Lust* (2008), 50 mobile-phone snapshots whose listed prices, in classic market fashion, become more 'interesting' the more of them are sold. The VAT ranges from under 8 percent to over 13 percent, instead of the official French rate of 5.5 percent. This is confusing, or confused, or both. The differing amounts seem arbitrary. Perhaps they follow a hidden logic. Perhaps the prominent presence of price plus value added tax is meant to accentuate what Adorno described as the 'administered, degraded art of the culture industry'; or what Khan has described as the 'instrumentalisation' of artwork by the marketplace; and the inscription of state power in every transaction; and, at the same time, the artist and gallery's desires to thumb their noses at these disciplinary regimes and registers, even while acknowledging, acquiescing, overcharging and paying. Or perhaps they can't add. Or perhaps I can't add. Or perhaps this arbitrary value added is a *supplément*, in the Derridean sense, an undecidable, irreducible, incommensurable othering/offering? Or perhaps not? Or perhaps not.

Christopher Mooney

Transmission, 2002, video installation at La Poste du Louvre, Paris, 4 synched video channels, 1 audio loop, 4 min 12 sec. Photo: Florian Kleinemann. © the artist. Courtesy, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.

Newspaper headlines such as 'Cartoon Conflict', 'Ai Weiwei Under Arrest' or 'Internet Censorship in Egypt' reflect the fraught nature of 'freedom of speech' these days – more than enough reason for the n.b.k. in Berlin and the Kunstverein Hamburg to devote a major double exhibition to this phenomenon. While the presentations devised by the two curators, Marius Babias and Florian Waldvogel, have some artists in common – Sister Corita Kent, ACT UP, Dan Perjovschi, Klaus Staeck, Silke Wagner and Olaf Metzel – their exhibitions are very dissimilarly structured. Babias, in Berlin, has gone for a systematic presentation, with Kent's Pop-ish, agitprop posters alongside works by other poster artists, such as Staeck and ACT UP. There is an almost academic precision about the way that his exhibits – in the spirit of theoretically founded enlightenment – are categorised and arranged, either according to their form or their content. Meanwhile, in Hamburg Waldvogel has not hung the American nun's posters on the clean wall of a white cube; instead he has put them up on a barrier inside a room in the gallery, with Wagner's bus – *Bürgersteig* (2001–2) – directly in front of it. This is the bus that the Frankfurt artist has lent to various groups of political activists as a mobile info-station. This exhibition is much more militant than the other, with moments of distinctly aggressive verve.

But the special thing about this double exhibition is that at both venues the fundamental right to free speech is scrutinised with specific reference to the works on show. To this end, all the exhibits were sent for critical appraisal to the Duisburg Institute for Linguistics and Social Research. The results of their analyses are on display in the exhibitions next to the relevant works. Unlike the usual bland educational labels, these comments sometimes even take the form of open criticism, as in the case of Metzel's sculpture *Turkish Delight* (2006) – a naked female figure with a headscarf. The Duisburg Institute regards this work as a 'reiteration of the patriarchal view of the female body'. A considered critique of this kind is more than merely hurtful; it also undermines the accepted rules of the game – in other words, the convention that an exhibiting artist is not going to be excoriated by the curator. It is precisely in this respect that freedom of speech proves to be not always that easy to handle for those concerned. And the way that this highly emotive issue is addressed here, self-reflexively and, so to speak, at the exhibition's own expense, gives *Freedom of Speech* its particular quality.

The only weakness in this highly committed joint venture lies in the almost exclusive focus of works of art on the problem of censorship; the two exhibitions almost entirely ignore the fact that freedom of speech, looking at it from the other side, can also become an issue when there is too much of it. Slavoj Žižek has frequently voiced this aspect of the problem: for instance, he explains the United States's admission of having used torture on the basis that the mere fact that something is talked about is enough to legitimise that thing; Ludwig Marcuse describes this as 'affirmative tolerance'. The current debate surrounding WikiLeaks only makes one brief appearance in the exhibition, in a small drawing by Perjovschi: six men wearing ties but naked from the waist down are flanked by the word 'Wikileaks'. *Raimar Stange. Translated from the German by Fiona Elliott*

n.b.k., Berlin

11 December – 30 January

Kunstverein Hamburg

18 December – 27 March

Freedom of Speech



Freedom of Speech, 2010 (installation view, Kunstverein Hamburg). Photo: Fred Dott

Books

BEAUTY IS IN THE STREET is a collection of posters (accompanied by archive photographs and manifesto texts) produced by the Atelier Populaire, an ad hoc print workshop set up in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts to produce posters supporting protesting students and workers during the infamous Paris uprisings of 1968. These are the posters that we all know – clenched fists or the snarling silhouettes of baton-wielding riot police and slogans along the lines of ‘*La lutte continue*’ (the struggle continues) – from exhibitions about punk or the Situationists, or the flurry of exhibitions and publications that came out to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the *événements*. Or you might know them from their recent appropriation as campaign tools for causes like the E. Leclerc supermarket chain’s ongoing struggle against high prices: ‘Price rises oppress your spending power’ read the slogan that accompanied our club-crazy cop, his riot shield now emblazoned with a bar code, as part of the company’s 2005 *affiches*.

Much of the material in the current volume was previously collected in the long-out-of-print-and-no-doubt-now-fabulously-expensive *Atelier Populaire: Posters from the Revolution*, published in England one year after the uprisings. Presumably the publication of this tome aims at bringing it all back to the people. Although when it comes to their publishing intentions, the Atelier are clearly a more cautious bunch than they were when they ran around slapping posters all over Paris. In a manifesto cum justification that prefaces both books, they begin by bigging up their produce as ‘weapons’ in the service of the ‘struggle’ against the rather vague but reassuringly timeless ‘established order of today’ (aka ‘bourgeois art’ and ‘bourgeois culture’). There’s also a side mission to do with liberating the artist from the ‘prison of privilege’ by reconnecting him or her with the realities of the factories and the streets. But, as anyone who’s immersed in the culture of the street today knows, with great, um... power comes great responsibility. ‘This book should not be taken as the final outcome of an

Beauty Is in the Street: A Visual Record of the May ’68 Paris Uprising

Edited by Johan Kugelberg with Phillippe Vermès
Four Corners, £25 \$40 (hardcover)

experience’, our friends from the Atelier warn, ‘but as an inducement for finding, through contact with the masses, new levels of action both on the cultural and the political plane’. Yeah! Fuck you, Leclerc! Or maybe not.

After all, a 272-page poster book is not really the street. And this ‘bringing it all back home’ business can be an expensive one: the book’s main editor, Johan Kugelberg, has, by his own admission, paid quite a lot of money to assemble his own collection of the posters. So is this book simply part of the loot of *la lutte*?

There’s no doubt that Kugelberg sounds a little delusional when he argues that the posters are more than mere historical documents and collectors’ items. In an age of YouTube films, phone cameras, blogging, tweeting and other such stuff, the posters are a throwback to a temporally near but technologically distant past. And perhaps the real beauty of the streets is that things pass through them; nothing stops for long. Just look at Banksy.

Still, Kugelberg, bless him, won’t let it lie, arguing that the Internet is merely a tool of ‘the spectacle’ that keeps would-be protesters off the streets while the authorities run riot. Presumably there are members of England’s National Union of Students (which has recently ditched its leader for his inability to support direct action over letter-writing) who might agree. And clearly there are similarities between the posters’ sloganising and today’s tweeting. And yet it’s hard to imagine a concerted poster campaign bringing about the kind of upheavals that are currently in the offing in North Africa and the Middle East.

More problematic, as the Atelier’s nervous manifesto suggests they are aware, is the tendency of books like this one to present an aesthetics of revolution, rather than the ideals or the experience. And this doesn’t just play out through Leclerc. Back in 2007, aestheticising the May 1968 message allowed Nicolas Sarkozy, current French president, to equate the movement’s call for equality to the banking collapse, by suggesting that in following an ‘everything’s the same’ creed, post-68 society could no longer distinguish right from wrong.

Perhaps the real lesson of the Atelier Populaire can be summed up via the thoughts of the Yiddish poet Abraham Sutzkever: ‘walk through words as through a minefield: one false step, one false move and all the words you strung in a lifetime on your veins will be blown apart with you’. It’s true of images, too. *Mark Rappolt*

AUTÉ



ITY STREE

ISING EDITED BY JOHAN KUGELBERG WITH

'I CARRY THE BLUE BOOK WITH ME EVERYWHERE AND SPEAK OF NOTHING ELSE', wrote Walter Benjamin, in a thank-you letter for a pretty notebook that he received as a gift in 1927. 'And I am not the only one', he continued. 'Other people too beam with pleasure when they see it.' The book itself, not just its contents – those droplets of thought, quotes, ideas, lists and book titles, puddling haphazardly into one another – had become an enchanted object. Is this commodity fetishism of the highest order? Or something else?

Fieldwork Notebooks, the first in a series of 100 'notebooks' – short essays, ideas and fragments – commissioned as a prelude to Documenta 13, is, neatly, a rumination on the notebook as a form in itself. Taussig is professor of anthropology at Columbia University, best known, indeed, for his work on Benjamin and commodity fetishism, and also one of the advisers for next year's edition of Kassel's quinquennial exhibition, under the direction of Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. Taussig approaches the notebooks of writers and artists (and even the sketchbooks of Le Corbusier, which he rather freely brings into the discussion) as though they were the 'fieldwork notebooks' – defined by the writer as 'notes taken in a field of strangeness' – of his own discipline.

If notebooks are fetishised by their owners, argues Taussig, then this is nothing compared to how they are pored over, later, by readers and admirers searching for meagre morsels in scribbled notes and half-formed thoughts, as well as, perhaps, some of the owner's aura. As Taussig points out, Le Corbusier's 73 sketchbooks have been published in full facsimile, running to thousands and thousands of pages (the publication of his notebooks being instigated by the architect in his own lifetime). As have notes and other marginalia in *Walter Benjamin's Archive* (2007), a book I'll admit to having bought as much for its visuotactile qualities as for anything else. Important, perhaps, is the curious commingling of thought and body in such documents – a 'short-circuiting', as Taussig puts it, of the structures of grammar and proper sentences in order that germs of ideas might run straight onto the page. A similar case is often made for drawing – the direct connection between the brain and the hand. (I retain, as an example of this, a very strong image from an interview I once read in which Ed Ruscha described being regularly compelled to make a note of a phrase while driving – messily scrawling, with eyes on the road, the words all on top of one another, even though they would be illegible later.)

Fieldwork Notebooks

By Michael Taussig
Hatje Cantz, €8 (softcover)

Some notes contain, for their writer, elements not included in the note. Roland Barthes, for example, in the essay 'Deliberation' (1979), recalls the particular grey of the sky (unrecorded) when reading his own recollection of waiting for a bus on the rue de Rivoli one disappointing evening – resurrection, he writes, 'occurring alongside the thing expressed: role of the Phantom, of the Shadow'. (In the case of Ruscha, not restricted to travelling on Parisian buses, one might imagine the feeling of driving, the weather, the road, a song on the radio or a state of mind on that particular day). Joan Didion, one of Taussig's central examples (via her essay 'On Keeping a Notebook', 1966), writes that it is her notes about others, recipes for sauerkraut and overheard conversations that allow her to keep in touch with her former selves, as she reinhabits the interstices of her notes: a hangover, a dress, a feeling of dread at having run over a snake. If those past selves reside in notebooks, then it's no wonder that these objects should be so fetishised as a kind of home for the writer, who can be found between the notes. Indeed, Benjamin wrote back to the sender of his blue notebook to ask for another one when he had filled the first: 'I cannot contemplate the prospect of soon having to write homeless thoughts again'. As Taussig points out, however, it was Benjamin who was homeless, 'squirreling [himself] away from the world, and stealing its secrets', with which to line his burrow. *Laura McLean-Ferns*

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AT THE END OF JANUARY, the Republican Study Committee (RSC) of the US House of Representatives issued a brief on the spending cuts proposed in its Spending Reduction Act of 2011. At the top of the list of organisations to 'sunset' stands the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which currently relies on roughly \$400 million in funding from the federal government, more than 75 percent of which, judging from the CPB's 2008-9 fiscal audit, goes to support local public television and radio stations around the country (with what it calls 'service grants'), as well as new digital networks, the remaining 25 percent goes to programming.

In a characteristic move in *Words & Money*, André Schiffrin, for 30 years the publisher of Pantheon Books (founded by exiled European intellectuals during the 1940s), notes that this funding comes to about \$1.35 per capita, which is pathetically smaller than the UK's '\$80 for the BBC' and the \$100 that goes to 'Denmark's and Finland's equivalents'. It seems the US is forever falling behind its European (and now some Asian) counterparts, and much of Schiffrin's book is dedicated to exploring alternative ways and means of enhancing economic support for a media landscape (the US's in particular) scorched by new technology and neoliberal imperatives, which Schiffrin detailed in a previous title, *The Business of Books* (2000).

Many of these alternatives are based on targeted tax and subsidy schemes: subsidising small, independent bookstores; a local tax on cinema tickets or DVD sales; creating local purchasing funds for the US's vast network of local libraries, which would resuscitate the market for independent presses, whose survival often depends on selling little more than a thousand copies of a title, not the tens of thousands expected by media conglomerates; endowments for major newspapers, such as *The New York Times*; or expansions of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS; which, I should add, gets paid by local public radio and TV stations from funds currently disbursed by the CPB) – all paid for by taxing auctions of broadcast spectrum, the profits of

Words & Money

By André Schiffrin

Verso, £12.99/\$23.99 (hardcover)

private broadcasters, advertising (on Google in particular) and cell phones. These are interesting proposals, and on the whole *Words & Money* is a brief, engaging and ultimately optimistic survey of ways we might get to some sort of détente between the two terms of Schiffrin's title. But ultimately the problem is not one of ways or means: it's one of politics, or rather ideology.

What reason does the RSC give for targeting the CPB as a 'waste' of taxpayer money? It claims that 'the intent of federally-funded public broadcasting in the Public Broadcasting Act was to make "telecommunications services available to all citizens of the United States" (47 U.S.C. 396). Today, over 99% of Americans own a TV and over 95% have access to the Internet. The Corporation's mission of ensuring universal access has been fulfilled and government-funded broadcasting is completely unnecessary.'

Ignore for the moment the implication that CPB carried out its mandate by giving away free televisions. Instead, note that these ten words quoted from the Public Broadcasting Act are pulled from point seven of its policy declaration, where they are preceded by the qualification that the government will only 'complement, assist, and support' making such services universally available (no free TVs after all). What is the act's first declaration? 'It is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of public radio and television broadcasting, including the use of such media for instructional, educational, and cultural purposes.'

Neither words nor money separate the clarity of that statement from the RSC's mockery of it; only cheap cynicism and dishonesty do. For astute critics such as Schiffrin, the 'public interest' is an important ideal; for the RSC and for many, many Americans today, it is a punch line. This is the crisis of our times. *Jonathan T.D. Neil*

WORDS & MONEY



SCHIFFRIN

media crisis of our time:
SCHESNEY

WHERE DOES ART BELONG? For Chris Kraus, on the evidence of this artful florilegium of magazine articles, catalogue essays and discursive notes, the answer is: mostly where people aren't looking for it. In the first and lengthiest essay, 'You Are Invited to Be the Last Tiny Creature', the LA-based critic (for venues ranging from *Artforum* to the webzine *Reality Sandwich*), novelist and filmmaker recounts, via multiple interviews and her own reminiscences, the brief and miraculous life (2006–8) of shoestring Echo Park art space Tiny Creatures. It's a story of maxed-out credit cards, Ariel Pink gigs (the scene essentially hothoused the current indie darling), exhibitions of fervent collages and beaucoup de drugs. The venue's prime mover, Janet Kim, comes across as devoted to countercultural activity, a grade-Z businesswoman and, for Kraus, exemplary of how to do it right: 'Tiny Creatures did what it set out to do,' writes Kim in the final 'manifesto' issued by the gallery. '...It refuses to be big.'

Of course, people have their abstract principles, and then, as reality bites, they compromise. (The essay ends, bittersweet, with Kim returning to the scene, having 'just accepted an invitation to curate a new Tiny Creatures show'.) Kraus cares about efforts to offer self-expressive alternatives to the mainstream, particularly in times inimical to such attempts. A section of the book devoted to the body as site of defiance opens with a retrospective look at 1960s 'sexual liberation newspaper' *Suck*, which fills one with admiration for its boldness and intellectual ambition, but the essay ends by mournfully comparing that era with our conservative present. Immediately after, Kraus delivers a participant's report on the 2008 Sex Workers' Art Show, a rolling revue of performance art and stripping, a flashpoint for Fox News reporters and Christian protesters: 'We were being run out of Virginia as witches,' Kraus concludes.

The examples of art-as-resistance that she upholds don't necessarily leave one hopeful, one feels, sometimes, that Kraus is picking the artists she writes about because she ought to pick *somebody*. Bernadette Corporation, lengthily profiled and repeatedly high-fived elsewhere in the book, are given messiahlike status for the dubiously oppositional act of showing a very long poem as art; Stefan Brüggemann, who suavely announces his interest in capitalism and failure

Where Art Belongs

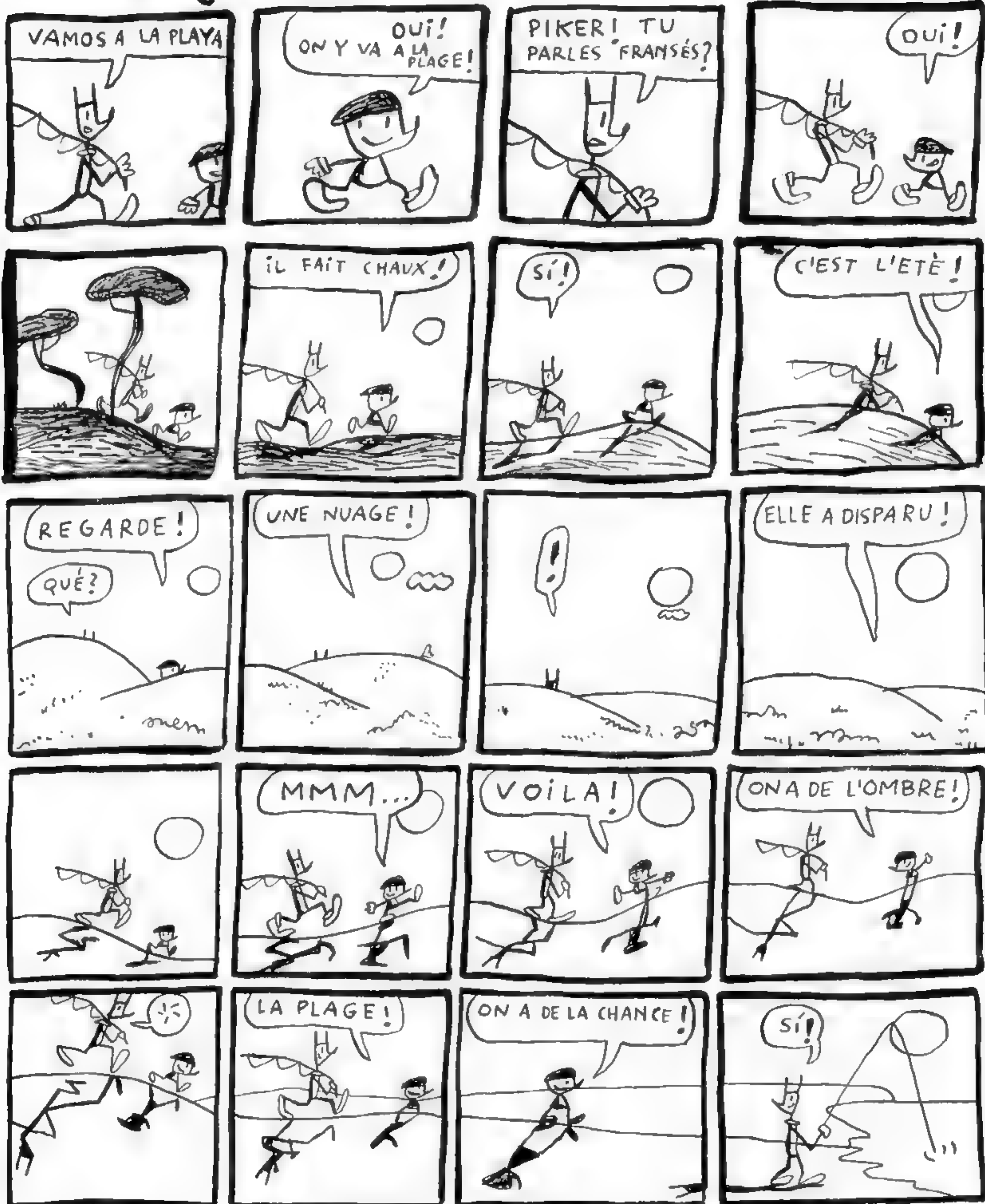
By Chris Kraus

Semiotext(e), £9.95/\$12.95 (softcover)

as 'not about criticizing it, but more about just celebrating but [sic] then that's very empty, but I kind of get attracted to that', seems to be spinning in circles of recursion. The best defence Kraus can muster is that his art is a 'passive-aggressive performance whose viewers define themselves through their responses'.

These boldface analyses are not the chief virtue of Kraus's writing, which is all tone and invisible technique: her style of slotting together episodic fragments is at once elegant and meandering, enacting its own resistance to easy consumption. Indeed, Kraus's discreet spikiness can sometimes morph into outright provocation. 'Indelible Video' begins by considering how video art has become a place for political documentary to go and die before miniscule audiences, and ends by locating political efficacy in the unlikeliest of places: the 'antibrand' American Apparel, with its sweatshop-free manufacturing, free English classes, zines, etc, which fills, for Kraus, 'the void left by avant-garde process-art projects of the last century'. Its Echo Park store, she says, displays found archival images – including 1960s mug shots and photos of bikini-clad students on spring break – reminiscent of artworks by 'the artists who gathered at Tiny Creatures'. Earlier, Kraus has glossed Baudrillard: 'Visual art has become *transaesthetic*. Like pornography, art no longer exists because it is virtually everywhere.' So art belongs in the store, incognito? Colour me uncertain. But if, as Kraus writes, American Apparel 'are able to reach more deeply into the culture than art ever can', perhaps that says less about the clothier than it does about art's steadily evaporating potentials. *Martin Herbert*

LOS garrinis



The Garriris



ON THE TOWN:

7 February

Jennifer Rubell at Stephen Friedman
Gallery, London

9 February

Larry Clark at Simon Lee Gallery, L.R.A.

photography DAN COOPEY and IAN FIERCE



- 1 Designer Marc Newson
- 2 Fashion designer Kinder Aggugini with Jennifer Rubell's work *Engagement* (2011)
- 3 Stephen Friedman and Jennifer Rubell
- 4 Restaurant critic Peter Elliot
- 5 Collectors Valeria Napoleone and Muriel Salem
- 6 Artist Mustafa Hulusi
- 7 Model Noelle Reno and collector Scot Young
- 8 Architect John Pawson
- 9 Artist Phillipa Horan and Calder Foundation chairman Sandy Rower
- 10 Critics Louisa Buck and Richard Cork with PR Erica Bolton
- 11 Collectors Don and Mera Rubell

- A Auctioneer Simon de Pury
- B DJ Mark Moore
- C Larry Clark and publisher Jefferson Hack
- D Artist William Daniels
- E Inverleith House curator Paul Nesbitt and Caroline Rae
- F Photographer Lincoln Clarkes and granddaughter
- G Photographer Johnnie Shand Kydd and Simon Lee
- H Bookseller Claire de Rouen
- I Sutton Lane Gallery's Cora Muennich and Gil Presti, curator Anne Pontegnie and Dominique Guyot
- J Film producer Ron Rotholz and friend
- K Artist Sam Griffin, the Architecture Foundation's Justin Jaeckle and artist Lisa Penny



Subject: off the record
Date: Thursday, February 24, 2011 11:11
From: gallerygirl@artreview.com
To: <office@artreview.com>
Conversation: off the record

I've got my Bionda Castanas and a Christopher Kane galaxy-print silk-chiffon biker jacket on – yes, boys, the Brits are back! That's my studied conclusion after observing the buds of spring reappear in this green and pleasant land. For a few years we've suffered: first China, then Russia, then India and finally Brazil was where it was at. But at last it's goodbye to the 'Third World', as the press have cheekily dubbed such countries. Art, culture and fashion are firmly back where they belong! Yes, in Britain – this proud kingdom where we cheer for Wills and Kate, weep for Dave's 'Big Society', unman ourselves at the ribald jokes about Johnny Foreigner on *Top Gear* and forget all dignity to apply in our thousands for unpaid work at the Olympics. Dear old Blighty is back where it belongs: at the centre of the world. And Greenwich Mean Time is ready once again to pound its strict rhythm on your slack Mexican ass!

My evidence? Not only was London Fashion Week a success, with well-known native talent Tom Ford the toast of the press (well, of the handful of magazines allowed in to view his collection), but the Ashes returned to these shores courtesy of fine work from that man-of-the-Midlands Jonathan Trott. In the artworld our brave Anish Kapoor triumphed in his debut show in the badlands of so-called 'India', and nearer home, the British Art Show paraded into London Town fresh from its international tour to far-flung Nottingham.

I trotted to the private view in my Nicholas Kirkwood floral satin pumps to greet the delightful cocurators Tom Morton and Lisa Le Feuvre. Morton, resplendent in his Stvdio by Jeff Banks charcoal herringbone two-button formal jacket, confided the curatorial angle to me: "They're British artists", he whispered conspiratorially. Genius! Forget pretentious twaddle like *The Beauty of Distance* – the nonsense those Aussies dreamed up for the Sydney Biennale – or Manifesta's ridiculous attempts to tango with North Africa; this is curating in its purest form.

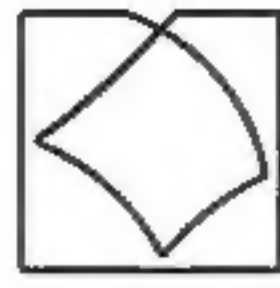
Leaving Tom to munch on the complimentary Terry's Chocolate Orange Segsations, I zipped around the exhibition to toast Britishness. I raised my glass of sparkling Perry to Varda Caivano, Milena Dragicevic, Wolfgang Tillmans, David Noonan, Christian Marclay, Edgar Schmitz and Maike Schoorel, although I was slightly puzzled to see that some Scottish artists, like Duncan Campbell, had sneaked into the show. It's great, though, that Britishness has finally embraced ethnic minorities, such as the delightfully exotic Charles Avery, who comes from some weird island where they all marry their cousins.

Joking aside, like, WTF is going on here? Reader: my 'ironic' last paragraphs have contained only one true Englishman – Anish, resplendent in his cravat and jodhpurs! OK, maybe Tom Morton as well, although he is rather tanned. And Lisa Le Feuvre, but she has a French-sounding surname. Angry, I cornered the Hayward's dapper American director, Ralph Rugoff (resplendent in a Christopher Shannon panelled anorak), and uttered the one question we've all wanted to ask: "What's with this postnational nonsense, Ralph? I mean, with a name like that, Spartacus Chetwynd can't be one of us!" Within seconds, his matching panelled chinos were a blur in the mid-distance.

Later, lodged uncomfortably with an eminent European curator in a toilet cubicle at a nearby Slug and Lettuce 'to avoid the noise', I learned that postnational is the new national. An Israeli artist who lives in Amsterdam is to represent Poland at this year's Venice Biennale. Despite representing Germany two years ago, Liam Gillick isn't German – unbelievable, I know, given that his writings seemed to have been badly mistranslated from the German. Apparently, when in Venice it's totally uncool to stick with artists who were born in the country that a show or national pavilion is named after. This is, of course, bad news for those slack nations who are just getting round to defining themselves in nationalistic terms – we don't want to hear what South Sudan's art scene is all about, we want to hear about post-South Sudan art right now and we want to see Angela Bulloch as their first representative at Venice. And we want their party to feature an ironic South Sudanese restaurant morphed into a Norwegian hot dog stand – somebody call Carsten Höller! But seriously, readers, I think enough is enough – let's get back to an idea of England that is serious, self-reflexive, tolerant yet rooted in the soil before we lose our sense of self completely. As they say round my part of the shires: *Wag! I got no long tin wit dis fuckery, battyman!*

GG

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Abdulrahman Katanani, "Balloons", mixed media, 268x65cm, 2011.

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